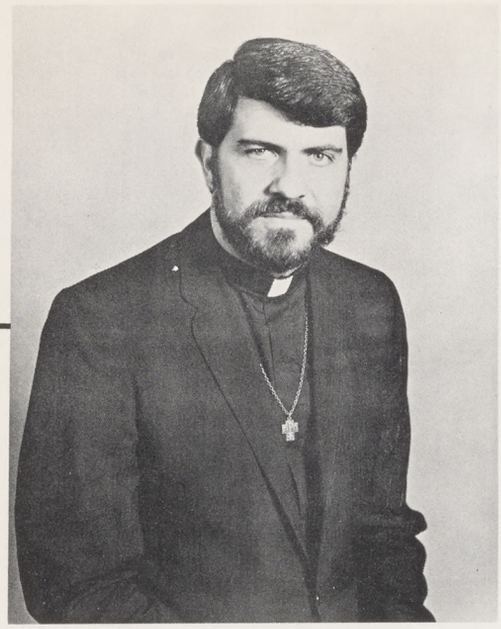
FEBRUARY 1978

IN UNITY

AND THE GAY CHRISTIAN

.75 DONATION



Reverend Perry's Message

Women. The "weaker" sex?

Don't you believe it! After watching the International Women's Year Conference in Houston, Texas, on television, and after receiving a telephone call from the Reverend Jeri Ann Harvey, the pastor of our Houston church, telling me of the intense emotional impact generated by the favorable vote on gay rights, I believe that women are at long last moving toward real equality with men in our culture.

And yet . . . even within the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, just as in the broader society in which we all live, sexism is still alive and well. We pride ourselves in the Universal Fellowship (as well we should) that sex is no bar to a person serving in any capacity within our denomination. Today, women serve on all committees, commissions and boards of this Fellowship. Three of the seven members of the Board of Elders are women. 38% of the District Coordinators in the United states are women; and 50% outside of the United States. 29% of all the ministers in the Fellowship are women. 30% of our Chartered Churches, Missions and Study Groups, (as of General Conference, 1977), have women as either pastors or worship coordinators. Very few other church groups can boast these numbers of women in pastoral and leadership positions in their denominations. By way of comparison, the Episcopal Church (USA) has .173% women in its' total ministry; the United Methodist Church has about 6%. The United Presbyterian Church has only about 4%, and the Southern Baptist Church only .011%. The United Church of Christ has about 5%, and the Roman Catholic Church no women at all.

And yet . . . recently I received a telephone call from a member of one of our churches. This member told me that he had voted against a pastor in a recently called congregational meeting because he believed certain stories he had heard about that pastor. (The pastor was sustained by the vote of confidence.) He informed me that this congregational meeting was the first meeting he had attended at church since that pastor had come there three months earlier; his reason for this: "I don't believe in women ministers." Not long ago, the chairperson of a pulpit committee in one of our churches asked me for a list of candidates, but she said to me confidentially, "The board is not interested in any women."

I never cease to be amazed by **us**; *(not the "thems" of the world,) but* **us**! *I would think that we, of all people, who have been delivered from Satan's oppression would never again put up with even the thought that a penis would be the determining factor as to who can and can not have a call from God to the ministry. The Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, in its doctrinal statement says we believe "that the Bible is the divinely-inspired Word of God, showing forth God to every person through the law and the prophets, and finally, completely and ultimately on earth in the being of Jesus Christ." Since we believe that the faith of this Fellowship is based in Scripture, let's see what the Word says about women and the ministry.*

The Prophet Joel in the Old Testament wrote that the day would come when, according to God, "I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your **daughters** *shall prophesy (preach and minister), your old people shall dream dreams, your young people shall see visions; and also upon the servants, both male and female, in those days will I pour out my Spirit." (Joel 2:28-29)*

In the New Testament Jesus, who was the fulfillment of the law and the prophets, ministered to women who in turn ministered to others. The story of Mary and Martha is one example. (Luke 10:38-42) Another is the story of the Woman at the well. (John 4:6-41) The Bible tells us that after Jesus taught his truth to her she became the instrument that God used to win many of the Samaritans to the Kingdom. It was women who carried the first message of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. (Matthew 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-10; Luke 24:1-11; John 20:11-18) Women were present and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost just as the men did. (Acts 1:13-14) As the early Church grew, women took their places in positions of authority just as the men did. In fact, in the Book of Romans, the Apostle Paul ends his letter by naming several women who were involved in the ministry of the Church at Rome. (Romans, chapter 16)

What about sexism? It is a sin. It is time for we who make up the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches to face that, and to eradicate sexism from our midst.

Women the "weaker" sex? Not on your life. As the Scripture says, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ; there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female: for all are one in Christ Jesus." ■

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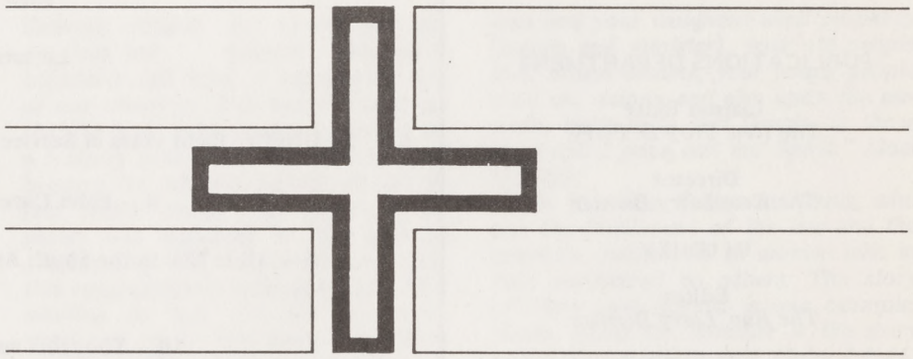
COMING IN APRIL:

"Pastor? Your church is on fire!"

Associate Editor Karen Davis writes about the incidents of arson and vandalism which have tried the faith of many of our congregations in recent years. Part one of a two part article.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

How Dare We...?



We call Rev. Perry a prophet of God, and we acknowledge that through him, in the act of bringing Metropolitan Community Church to birth and guiding it from strength to strength, God Almighty has rekindled a prophetic spirit in the world, and is showing us, day-by-day, new revelations, and new perspectives to the revelations given to the prophets of old.

How dare we call Rev. Perry a prophet? How dare we presume that God is once again letting the prophetic voice be heard in the earth? And most of all, how dare we claim that prophetic reality for our own – for Metropolitan Community Church, the newest and, by worldly standards, the most insignificant of church groups? These questions beg answers, and I will venture to answer them, but first, in these words quoted from our Board of Elders, let us consider what a prophet is and is not; and what constitutes a prophetic message:

"A prophet is not one who is infallible, but one who wrestles with fallible human will and seeks to surrender it to God. A prophet is not one who always speaks for God, but rather one through whom God, at times, speaks – one who shares the prophetic revelation of God's message to humankind.

"A prophetic message is not a convinced or convincing personal statement, but rather a message from God to God's people through a human voice that is careful to differentiate between 'I believe' and 'God said'."

In the above statement I believe that the Board of Elders has given us a Biblical definition of prophecy. (Jeremiah 1:4-8) A prophet, according to scripture, is an authorized spokesperson for God, not primarily a predictor of the future. It is by this definition of prophecy that we in MCC hold Rev. Perry to be a prophet – a true and authorized representative speaking for God in our time.

Who authorized him?

The Lord God Almighty.

How did this take place?

By his own admission, a conviction was placed in his heart, and he "knew" the things which God was calling him to do.

Is this prophetic commission restricted to Rev. Perry?

No – unless we become a "stubborn and hard-hearted people" and refuse to hear and act upon what God used Rev. Perry to begin. We are all, each and every one of us, called to be prophetic people.

What about those individuals, in our Fellowship and beyond it, who find these things difficult to accept?

For these people, all I can offer are three thoughts:

First, when, in all the history of God's people, has it *not* been difficult to accept the prophetic movement of God? Past generations rejected or killed their prophets. Our generation says, "Such things no longer happen." Think about it.

Second, A prophet – a spokesperson for the Almighty – certainly ought to reflect the things he or she says God is showing to them. I believe that the testimony of Rev. Perry's life, and the testimony presented by every single Metropolitan Community Church will bear this out.

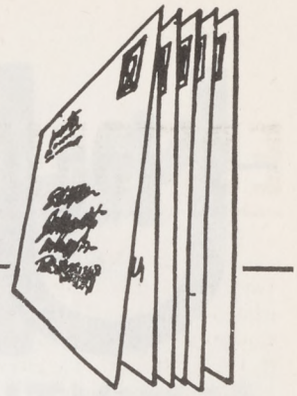
And finally, I think the following quotation (the source of which escapes me) provides the best answer of all:

"For those who believe, no explanation is necessary. For those who do not believe, no explanation is possible."

Those who hear and respond to God's message revealed in Rev. Perry, and in the church God called him to raise up, respond ultimately through faith. We believe that what God has promised *will* come to pass – *is* coming to pass – and that the Almighty has given us a unique, important and very significant part to play in this generation's "passage" to the fulfillment of God's promise: the Kingdom of God in Jesus Christ. ■

Larry Bernier
Los Angeles, California
January, 1978

LETTERS



To The Editor:

I would like to state most emphatically that I certainly do not want to see IN UNITY discontinued. I think that it is a vital and very important part of our ministry. It is an instrument used many times within my district as an outreach to our community. However, I hope to see an increase in Christian articles and a decrease in sexual articles appearing in IN UNITY. I feel that our community has access to *THE ADVOCATE* and that should suffice their sexual needs. I feel that it is imperative that IN UNITY become the spiritual paper that it was my feeling was its initial purpose. I recall most vividly at our conference in San Francisco the great discussion regarding IN UNITY and what would and would not be published in it. It does not amuse me that we voted at that time to turn down any adds in IN UNITY that could possibly be construed as undesirable or offensive in a Christian publication when we continue to print articles that I find as offensive as I am sure I would ads for nudity or the baths. I realize that I would probably stand far too much alone on this issue, but at the same time I feel that it is only fair that I write you my feelings regarding it.

Yours in the continuing
service of Christ,
(Rev.) Jeri Ann Harvey
Houston, Texas

To the Editor:

Please don't think of giving up IN UNITY. I like it very much and am subscribing to it now. If you'd promote subscription sales I think it would help spread the good word. Thanks.

Ted Wentzell
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

To the Editor:

I am responding for myself and my lover to the notice in the October 1977 IN UNITY regarding the possible discontinuance of publication of this excellent magazine.

We first attended MCC in North Hollywood and rapidly became active members about one and a half years ago. I am from a fundamentalist background. Because of problems centering around the idea that one cannot be both gay and Christian, I had been out of fellowship with any Christian group for 15 years. It was a long time in the desert.

As soon as I began attending MCC in North Hollywood, I devoured everything I could find to read relative to MCC and to being gay and Christian. I was delighted when I discovered IN UNITY and have continued to read every syllable in it since that time.

The point of this letter is to state very strongly that IN UNITY — The Gay Christian is very important, both to individuals, and to the outreach of the Fellowship. In fact, this is a plea that this fine magazine, containing both sections, continue to be published.

Betty
North Hollywood, California

To The Editor:

This is in response to your comment on page four of the October issue of *In Unity* that consideration is being given to the discontinuance of this publication.

In my view, such a discontinuance would be a calamity. Without it, how would an individual member have any contact with the Fellowship as a whole, or be aware that more was going on than he could see at his local level? It is a great encouragement to me to be able to see the wonderful progress being made throughout the Fellowship. You there at the headquarters receive continual reports showing the activity that is going on. We at the local level are in total ignorance of these things unless we hear them by word of mouth, an unreliable source of information.

Also, it serves another purpose. Personally through the years, I have picked up a great many acquaintances in various places throughout the country and even the world. The information contained in your section *"The Fellowship Family"* makes me feel close to them throughout the year.

Sincerely,
Ronald D. Soucey
Coral Gables, Florida

A small but significant number of letters and inquiries have been received at Fellowship Headquarters in reference to an article published in the "Fellowship Family" section of the October issue of IN UNITY. The article mentioned that an Exhorter had performed a service of Holy Union in a church of the Universal Fellowship. We share the following information with you in the hopes that it will clear up some of the confusion on this matter:

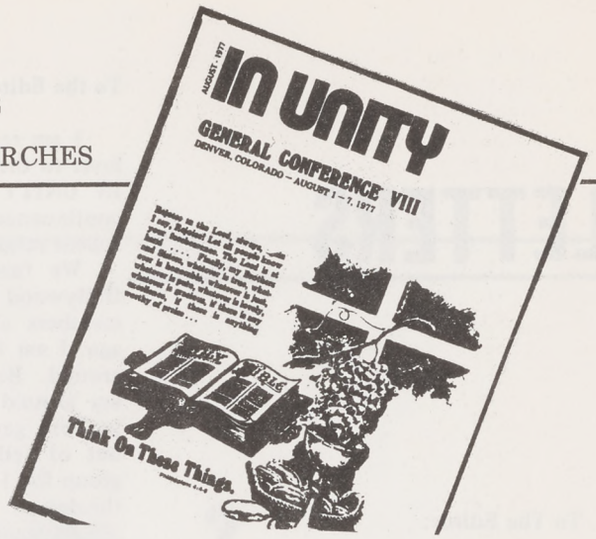
In response to the question of "how and when an Exhorter has been given permission to perform a Holy Union?", I would like to make two points: First, the UFMCC By-Laws do not mention licensed or ordained ministers in conjunction with the Rite of Holy Union, but rather, "a duly authorized minister of the church." (Article III. C.3) Second, Article IV.C.2.c of the By-Laws, which describes the duties of Exhorters reads in part: "Under the close supervision of the pastor, the Exhorter may perform all duties as listed for Deacons." Article IV. C.1.c describes the duties of Deacons as follows: "The duties may, if necessary and circumstances dictate, include administering the rites and sacraments under the authorization and under the direction of their pastor."

Although it is in accordance with a strict interpretation of the By-Laws, it is not generally recommended that Deacons or Exhorters perform such functions except when a licensed or ordained minister is unavailable.

(Rev. Elder) Carol S. Cureton
for the Board of Elders

IN UNITY

EIGHT YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE
UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP OF
METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES



by the Rev. Larry Bernier

In the early days of MCC the church faced many needs. Small groups of people all over the United States, and beyond its boundaries, wanted to affiliate with the Fellowship, but they needed to know what Metropolitan Community Church was all about; what it taught and believed.

Rev. Perry was the church's most visible spokesperson, but he, and the other Elders, had numerous responsibilities and couldn't always supply answers. Our ministers were few and overworked. Our laity had their hands full keeping their new congregations alive and growing, and literature was scarce – mostly an assortment of hastily-printed newsletters run off on second-hand mimeograph machines, and even these were usually in short supply.

The "vision" of MCC – of God's all-inclusive love for all God's children – was fresh and new then. Those who perceived it often couldn't find adequate ways to articulate what they had come to understand. How does one describe a rainbow to the blind; a symphony to the deaf? And this was not the only problem.

Some people came to MCC thinking it would be "just like their old churches, except that it was gay." Some came with the idea that MCC was primarily a social organization in the guise of a church. Others came out of a desire to promote humanitarian concerns; they perceived a church structure as the ideal vehicle for this purpose, but saw no real use for the "Christian overtones" which went along with the deal. Most of those who came, however, came looking for God. And they found what they were seeking.

To say that there was disunity in the church in its earliest days would certainly be a true statement, but not an entirely accurate one. The Fellowship was pressing out in many directions – seeking, exploring, sensing God's Spirit – and often those directions led to radically different viewpoints on what Metropolitan Community Church would or should become. Certainly there was disunity, but the surprising aspect of the situation was not that this disunity hindered MCC in its striving after God's vision for the new church, but rather, how it stimulated the women and men of the church to be sensitive to each other, to listen to each other, to pray and plan together, and to seek God's will for all the church. And because of this, as so often happens when people open themselves up to God and to each other, what could have been a curse was turned into a blessing, and the Universal Fellowship – cherishing its diversities and acknowledging the differences which make each child of God a unique person – began to move ahead as a united people. The church developed unity in its diversity, but could this new spirit of unity be maintained and strengthened?

The Fellowship needed something. It needed a means by which one congregation could share its triumphs and sorrows with the other congregations of the church. Isolated groups needed to know that they weren't alone in God's work. Ideas needed to be shared, and the vision of God's inclusive love needed to be spread far and wide as it became clearer and more alive in the local congregations. Having realized these needs, the Fellowship sought ways to answer them. Conferences were held where brothers and sisters could share and fellowship together. Ministers and lay people visited in other congregations around the fellowship spreading news and building friendships. And a very important part of this unifying process occurred in 1970 with the establishment by the Board of Elders of IN UNITY magazine, the official publication of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches.

The magazine was "launched" with limited personnel, little money, and almost no production resources. To compensate for this, IN UNITY had grand visions for the future, a rich and undisputed field in the coverage of gay and gay-related religious news, and the blessing of everyone from the General Conference of the church to the newest lay person in the newest congregation! This was eight years ago, and much has happened since that time.

As we begin 1978 with this first issue of the new year, we can see that some things about IN UNITY have changed, and some have remained the same.

IN UNITY is no longer alone in the field of gay religious news coverage. Many excellent newsletters, papers and magazines have begun publication in recent years and even the establishment press – both secular and religious – has started to cultivate the fertile ground of gay and gay-related religious news.

IN UNITY still has some of the problems which plagued it in the beginning: limited personnel, little money, and almost no production resources, but IN UNITY has never lost its grand visions for the future, and slowly and certainly those visions are coming alive as the magazine continues to grow and develop.

IN UNITY has been blessed these past eight years with many fine editors: Bob Ennis, who nurtured its beginning; Rev. Tom Taylor, who broadened its scope and content; and most recently, Rev. Richard Mickley, who made IN UNITY a respected and pro-

fessional magazine with an international reputation for quality.

With my appointment in January as Director of Publications and Editor of IN UNITY, I inherit both the problems and the grand visions of the magazine. I believe that the problems can and will be solved, and that the visions will be realized, and – like each one of my predecessors – I pledge, with the help of God and of God's people – to do all that is in my power to see that IN UNITY continues to be a witness of what God is doing in and through the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, and that it continues to foster unity in our Fellowship by communicating the news and activities of each congregation to all the other congregations of our church.

As our Fellowship prospers and grows – both spiritually and materially – IN UNITY will share and celebrate that growth.

As our vision becomes stronger and clearer, IN UNITY will help spread it and make it known.

As the forces of evil and wickedness assail the church – and we may well expect this to happen – IN UNITY will help keep us moving ahead together in *unity* and in strength.

IN UNITY is more than just a news magazine for our Fellowship. It has become for many of us a symbol; a record of what our Fellowship has been, a testimony of what our Fellowship is doing, and a vehicle which we can all use as God continues to reveal to us the work and mission which the Almighty would have done in this age of the Church.

IN UNITY has served our Fellowship well in the past eight years, and I have confidence that it will continue to serve the Fellowship for many years to come. I hope you will read IN UNITY, that you will enjoy it and share it with your family and friends. I hope you will support it and promote it so that it may reach many new people in the months and years ahead. But most of all, I hope that each issue of IN UNITY will be a blessing to every reader – both in the Universal Fellowship and beyond it. Let us press on together.

IN UNITY

INSTITUTIONAL MINISTRY

Once again the government has requested and been granted a postponement in the trial proceedings dealing with MCC's right of entrance to federal prisons. The matter was scheduled for consideration during the month of December.

At that meeting, a Federal Bureau of Prisons representative presented a brief (weighing about two pounds) and asked for a change of venue. These complications led to another lawyer volunteering his services to help in the case. These now are scheduled for further consideration in January.

The Board of Institutional Ministry (USA) is very fortunate to have administrative help now available in the National Office. John Wilds, formerly of Omaha, Nebraska, is assisting the National Director in handling telephones and correspondence. Rev. Bob Arthur, in addition to his duties in the Institutional Ministry office, was recently elected District Coordinator for the Southwest District UFMCC, so the additional staff member will be instrumental to the continued efficient operation of this important aspect of MCC's ministry.

The staff assistant position in the Institutional Ministry office has been funded through CETA, a government program which assists people in gaining on-the-job work experience. CETA-funded positions have a time limitation, and the position for the Institutional Ministry office expires soon. Fellowship funds have not been budgeted for additional staff personell in this office, but the CETA worker has proved that additional help is necessary if the office is to keep up with the workload. Commenting on this situation, National Director Rev. Bob Arthur says: "We are now faced with the fact that our assistant must soon leave us when his funding ends; I'm afraid the quality of the out put of the National office will greatly suffer because of this. We would like to continue staffing the office with supplementary funds received as donations from people who are committed to seeing our work continue. I believe that there are people in our Fellowship who would help us in this matter; all contributions received for office staffing assistance would be applied toward payment of a staff assistant to continue the efficient service to prisoners and former prisoners which this office has provided in the years past." Donations may be designated for office staffing and sent to:

Board of Institutional Ministry (USA)
Post Office Box 5570
Los Angeles, CA 90055

Rev. Arthur proudly announces that the *Prison Ministry Handbook* is now available in a braille edition. Copies can be ordered from the Braille Institute in Los Angeles, California for $5.00 each.

The 1977-78 edition of *Prisoner's Yellow Pages* has been completed and will be available for orders in the not-to-distant future; funds are still needed to complete printing of this prison ministry aid.

The work of the Board of Institutional Ministry is growing, the Board is now involved with over 900 prisoners in the USA. Many prisoners who have been involved in this ministry in the past have since been relased, and are now working in their local areas to help the National organization better serve brothers and sisters still in prison.

Elder Cureton Goes West

By Karen Davis

Time and distance have come full circle for the Rev. Elder Carol Cureton.

1971 saw her in Los Angeles and first walking through the door of a Metropolitan Community Church -- and now, after four years in Missouri, she's back in town and working at Fellowship Headquarters.

The reasons for this move -- and for leaving a successful pastorate in St. Louis, had been in the back of her mind for some time, jelling in September when she was in Los Angeles helping to coordinate fund-raising efforts for the 16-day fast of the Fellowship's Founder, the Rev. Elder Troy Perry.

And what it jelled into was the need for better communication throughout the Fellowship.

"Troy's fast was the biggest catalyst (for the move to Los Angeles)," Carol says. "I saw what a tremendous need there was for follow through here with the Board of Elders and the Fellowship.

"I had always been aware of a lack of communication in the Fellowship and had just filed it away in my mind. As an Elder I became aware that there was no regular communications, even among the Elders between their scheduled meetings.

"We're supposed to be doing God's business, and one of the most important parts of that business is communication. The Board of Elders is to function as the Board of Directors for a large corporation and that means communication.

"Too many neat things happen in this Fellowship that no one knows about . . . people responding to God's love for the first time . . . .

"Our older, more established churches could benefit from communication with some of our smaller, but very enthusiastic study groups, and some of these study groups could learn many useful things from the experiences of some of the established churches.

"There's no need for every group to keep making the same mistakes over and over again."

After graduating from Southeast Missouri State in 1968 with double degrees in biology and chemistry, being accepted to Medical school and deciding not to go, and moving to southern California, this "good little Christian girl" decided she'd had it with religion.

"I was Southern Baptist from the cradle up," she says, "and was active in church until my junior year in college. I left the Church and swore off organized religion: 'I'll never go back! Never!'

"I didn't darken the door of a church from '68 to '71, but I never got that cynical about God, just about church . . . there was a void, though. It was keenly felt."

Carol recounts a tale of seeing a notice of MCC church services on a bulletin board at the Gay Women's Services Center in Los Angeles, and how it took her a full year to get up the nerve to go to check it out.

"I didn't know what to wear," she laughs.

Things moved fast after that. She was licensed as an exhorter at MCC—LA in June, 1973. She moved to St. Louis in July and on October 28, 1973 MCC St. Louis held its first service under her leadership.

Guided by her, the St. Louis congregation was granted mission status Dec.31, and was chartered April 21, 1974. In August, 1974 Carol was licensed as a minister in the Fellowship and elected District Coordinator of the Mid-Central District on the same day.

A year later she was elected to the Board of Elders -- a Fellowship first, since she had not yet been ordained.

When asked where she thought the Fellowship is headed, Carol responded:

"Hopefully it's headed toward what I think God has called it to be." Carol explained, "What I see as the purpose of the Fellowship is renewal for all of Christendom.

"Long after the gay issue is settled (and our culture no longer considers it a big deal) we will still be preaching a gospel of an inclusive, loving God. We will be portraying a loving God, not a spiteful one.

"That's one reason we're so threatening to the Church at large. I think we're living and preaching a new concept of sin, not a concept of 'if you do this, God will zap you'. What God is actually saying is, 'if you do this, you'll miss the best I have for you'.

"And God DOES want the best for every person.

"As long as Christendom thinks we're playing church, just a bunch of dykes and queens, they don't take us seriously.

"But when they see that we are seri - ous, they get scared . . .

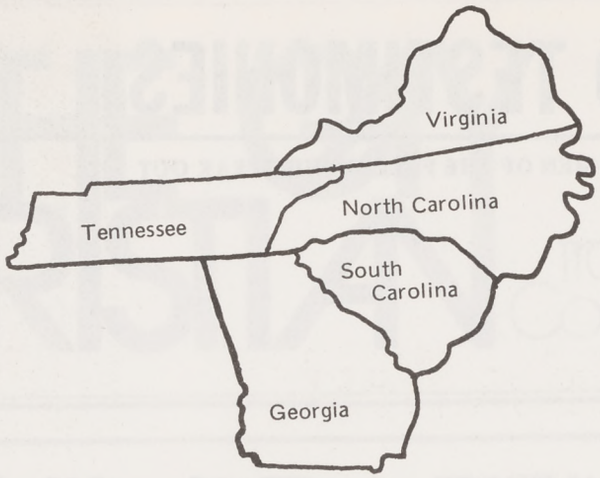
"I have truly learned the meaning of 'Lord, come quickly'," says Carol. "If the Fellowship can hold on to the message it was given, it will be the most despised and rejected of churches, in human terms, but it will also change history.

"I think we are moving from it (the gay issue) to the whole concept of God's nature and a proclamation of God's love for all people - a proclamation that I believe will be more controversial than God's love for gays.

"One of my major aims in moving to Los Angeles is to be a conduit of information, a facilitator, to help our vision and our message reach people the quickest and most efficient way possible...to make the road just a bit smoother for our congregations and our ministers who proclaim the gospel.

"In school and business I learned administrative skills -- in St. Louis I learned ministerial skills -- now I have the opportunity to offer both to God's ser - vice in a new and exciting way. I believe that there is no clear and absolute distinction between work that is 'ministry' and work that is not. If, in the long run, it contributes to the over-all work of the church, then it is ministry.

"As a friend of mine remarked while helping me typeset our newsletter, 'I guess we really do preach a gospel of 'justification' -- but sometimes that includes 'right margins' as well as souls.' "



All Is Well in the South Atlantic District

By Rev. Richard R. Mickley

(Rev. Mickley reports on his visit, in November, to the South Atlantic District Conference and to the various congregations in that district.)

I've been going to District Conferences since 1972, and it was refreshing to observe, and be caught up by, the enthusiasm of the ten church groups which constitute this relatively new district.

Most of the groups are young, and struggling, but growing. The dynamic and pioneering spirit of these young congregations reminded me of the excitement and fervor which has always been characteristic of MCC.

It was good to see Brother Jay Neely and the happy group that is beginning a work in Birmingham, Alabama. They have joy and faith -- and with these two precious resources, I know that God will provide the rest. Birmingham is the youngest group in the District.

Chattanooga, Tennessee is growing and looking for a regular meeting place. Columbia, South Carolina has an average attendance of 30 and money in the bank. They have experienced phenomenal growth in the last six months and praised Rev. Jim Hill who served as pastor during that time. Now that Rev. Hill has moved on to other work for the Lord, the Board of Directors there assumed the duties of a pulpit committee to search for a new pastor. They recently announced that they had extended a call to the Rev. Keith Davis.

Augusta, Georgia is struggling, but is blessed with the dynamic leadership of two extraordinary college students, Steve and George. They have kept the work alive there, and lives have changed in that community.

Greensboro, North Carolina, working with its worship coordinator, Rev. Bill Taylor, is experiencing a lot of support from the local community, and recognition from local businesses. They meet in the Unitarian Church and Rev. Taylor has appeared on local television several times.

Rev. Charlene Taylor reported that the Memphis, Tennessee congregation is growing and maturing. She relates an incident recently where a member, while witnessing, had his MCC cross yanked off his neck as he was told he had "no right to wear the cross of Jesus" because he was a homosexual.

In Raleigh, North Carolina, St. John's MCC and its pastor, the Rev. Willy White, are praying for more women to become active in the church. They meet in the building of the United Church of Christ and enjoy a good relationship with that church. Rev. White has been invited to preach at the local Baptist church. St. John's has a sound Christian Education program and they especially enjoy their regular weekly fellowship dinners.

MCC Nashville continues to grow in numbers. Pastor Tom Bigelow reported attendance averaging in the 70's and their church office is staffed by a full time administrator. In addition, Compton House, which is operated by the congregation seven days a week, offers a variety of spiritual and social programs from pot luck dinners to a Charismatic Prayer Group. I was impressed to observe a church family planning and sharing to determine, as a church, the direction of the church, and working together to become God's people in Nashville.

In Atlanta, Georgia, the pastor, the Rev. Howard Wells, reported that "Operation Resurrection" is taking place in the five and a half year old church, which hosted the 1973 General Conference. Because of this the congregation is learning new ways to work together to strengthen their corporate life. My own observation was a church alive and eager to be a church. The hospitality accorded to me and the other guests was overwhelming. The Wednesday night fellowship dinner I attended was a time of fun and sharing. I saw a church eager for and interested in the kind of growth that comes from continuing Christian Education. I saw people working together and people excited about their role in the Atlanta community. I saw a pastor, loved and respected, trusted as a counselor, sought as an advisor, and strong in his leadership of a church which, along with him, is seeking to be a living witness to Jesus Christ in Atlanta.

At the District Conference, Rev. Wells ended his report by saying that it had been exciting to serve as first District Coordinator of the new district and watch it grow. He declined to be a candidate for reelection, citing the exciting and growing obligations he felt toward the church in Atlanta.

The Rev. Tom Bigelow, Pastor of MCC Nashville, Tennessee, was unanimously elected District Coordinator, and in a brief comment asked the prayers of all the congregations. He promised to work together with all the groups in the coming year, and to spend time with each congregation, visiting and "really becoming friends."

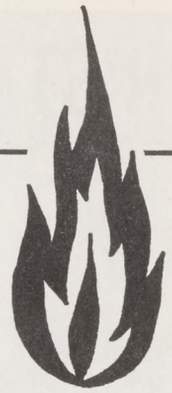
The Rev. F. Randall Hill was elected Assistant District Coordinator and Jim Drews of Nashville was elected Secretary/Treasurer. Representatives were elected for various UFMCC task forces, boards, and commissions.

When the business was put aside, I was personally pleased with the attention given to the ideas I presented for the next several hours in a workshop based on my book, *Christian Sexuality*. All the churches had held local discussion groups based on the Study Guide included in the book, and the workshop was an in-depth follow-up and wrap-up of the wide Christian Education project. As author, I am pleased that more than 200 copies of the book were obtained and used for the project.

I left Atlanta feeling more than ever that the South Atlantic District of the Universal Fellowship is alive and full of God's Spirit, even, and especially, in its newest congregations. ■

THOUGHTS AND TESTIMONIES

THE LAY WOMEN AND MEN OF THE FELLOWSHIP SPEAK OUT



"A View of the Vision"

by Donna Wade
Los Angeles, California

The most incredible, moving story available to us in MCC, cannot be purchased in a bookstore, nor borrowed from a library. It is the most gentle love story ever imagined; a history begun thousands of years ago; a mystery -- and though the author has already revealed the secret link -- the plot is, as yet, incomplete. God is the author. We are the main characters -- protagonist as well as antagonist. I speak about the story of God's people, which will only be completed upon Christ's return to this world. Whether or not this story has an ending pleasing to God depends on us, the body of believers. For God has given us the choice -- we will either follow Christ's teachings with all that is in us, or we will not. There is no 'in-between'.

When I was a child, I was under the impression that God only spoke to clergy, and that the laity received their direction from the ministers. So, like a good Catholic girl, I studied hard for the nuns -- I learned my catechism -- memorizing all the mortal sins, the sacraments and even most of the saints.. The priest would come each week to quiz us. If a person did well, Sister Mary Aloysius would give them a holy card -- a laminated card with a picture of Christ on it, with the name of the local funeral home printed on the back. I had quite a collection of those cards, more than most of my classmates, so I just knew that God loved me best. And every day, instead of playing at recess, I would say my rosary in front of the statue of Mary on the convent lawn. I said many rosaries, because the nuns explained to me that I could get to heaven faster -- each rosary would cancel out part of the time I was to burn in purgatory. But they hardly talked to me of Jesus; they never told me that he laughed, or that I could talk to him or be touched by him.

This all probably sounds rather ridiculous to you. Even though I know differently now, I still remember those days of trying to buy my way into heaven. And I wonder if those days are really past. I am afraid that those rosaries and holy cards still exist, on a more sophisticated level, and in our Fellowship. Now the tokens are how many meetings one attends per month, how much one tithes, how many counseling sessions one conducts, or even how loudly one says "Amen" or "Praise the Lord". The list is endless.

There is no doubt in my mind, or in my heart, that God has called this Fellowship into being to communicate a new message, a new vision. That it is a provocative message is not surprising, for Christ's teachings were radically opposed to the accepted norms of his time. We, as the body of Christ today cannot anticipate the dissemination of God's word to be any easier for us than it was for our Lord. But, just as our Lord derived the strength to continue from the Creator, we, too, find our source of power, happiness, and perserverance in Jesus the Christ.

We in MCC are a peculiar people, called by God, special in that we have been given a unique task. We are the followers of Christ. We have been entrusted with the task of leading people to God, and charged with the responsibility of helping each other. Being special to God involves the possibility of personal hardship. We may be called to experience any number of things so that we may gain the understanding and, hopefully, the wisdom, to assist others in their particular need.

Being Christian requires action, not passivity. We cannot allow ourselves to rest as long as a single person remains oppressed. We must affirm the dignity of every person, beginning within our own community. We cannot continue placing each other in pre-labeled boxes, or WE become our worst oppressors. How can we justify, to any degree, the demand on society to stop the oppression and bigotry, when we, ourselves, are guilty of the same practices, directed toward each other?

We cannot allow ourselves to become the "GAY" church. We are building God's community on earth, and that requires an assembly of ALL people. If we do not welcome ALL people, from every persuasion, who are trying to find God, and accord them the same love and respect shown to us, we become a mockery of the gospel we have been called to preach.

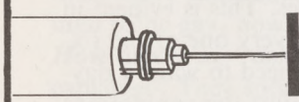
God's story draws nearer to its end, and this Fellowship is on the verge of something truly wonderful. The ending WILL be pleasing to God, if we bring people to know God's love -- by preaching the gospel, by reaching out joyfully to each other, by LIVING what we preach. There are many persons in this world who need us, and our hearts can never be closed to their need -- regardless of how many times we are called to repeat the message of God's inclusive love, regardless of how prosperous and comfortable our church homes become, regardless of how frustrated we become. God did not turn away from us -- we cannot turn away from one another.

God is preparing us for what is to come. Let us remember that as people we are committed to sharing God's love and doing God's work. God speaks to us each day of what we must do, and we are assured by the promise that God will provide what we need. If we return to a simple, childlike trust in God, and reach out to others with God's love truly in our hearts, then the work of this body will be blessed. God will give us the courage to do what we must. In this new year, let's give back to God, "a total response from the whole person." And may we always be filled with the happiness that comes from knowing God, yet never allowing that joy to become so comfortable that it blocks the vision of what we, in Metropolitan Community Church, are called to do and be.

THE GAY CHRISTIAN

A journal of theological reflection from Metropolitan Community Church

THEOTHERAPEUTIC HOCUS POCUS AND HOMOSEXUALITY



Dr. Ralph Blair

PERHAPS UNNOTICED by psychiatrist Thomas Szasz and others in their attention to the mental health establishment's usurpation of the religious establishment is the religious establishment's re-emergence as a powerful instrument for dealing with questions of human behavior. Indeed, for many (especially fundamentalists), who never did buy into the psychiatric line, the religious establishment's influence never really waned. Some people now are making claims that there are those who have been changed from homosexual orientation to heterosexual through Christian conversion, prayer, exorcism, Spirit-baptism, or divine healing. Nonetheless, I have found that such truly reversed people are as rare a breed as those who supposedly changed through therapy. Put as simply as possible: there is no validated evidence that they exist.

Even though the popular Christian press has often been as naive as was the earlier popular secular press in reporting such "miracle cures" without doing some sound investigative reporting, there can be found no validated case of sexual reorientation through any spiritual means. This is not to say that the naive Christian press has not reported and even promoted stories of so-called "liberation." But then, some Christian publications, organizations and individuals have been especially embarrassed by having promoted "ex-gay" ministries and "miracle healings" which later proved not only to be frauds but were cover-ups for continued homosexual practice under the guise of a so-called "Jonathan and David" relationship. What has been found, not only involves fraud but self-deception, diagnostic error and confusion, placebo effects, psychopathological denial, disillusionment, and even eventual suicide. It has been acknowledged even by Greg Reid of Eagle Ministry (part of the EXODUS work) that "Time after time I have talked to confused torn-up people whose cry for help was met by a 5-minute 'deliverance' session to cast the demons out of them, leaving them more confused, frustrated and desperate than before."[1]

Something that emerges clearly in analyzing all of the "ex-gay" testimonies is a common background of

unhappiness running throughout the "former" gay lives. At times, stories that are reported to have been true of the pasts of "ex-gays" are made up of the most sordid and tragic situations imaginable. It becomes a sort of "can-you-top-this" confession match.

Roger Grindstaff remembers that his "whole world exploded" after he learned of wht his "lover was doing," (apparently a reference to sexual relations with others). He says he turned to drugs, "speed" that "practically wrecked my nervous system," male prostitution, alcohol, three years working in a gay bath house "unable to function in society . . . a creature who only came out at night, stealing, drinking, and waking up in jail." With no friends, suicidal thoughts and walking around "like a robot," he concluded that "my life was meaningless."[2] Grindstaff has said that most of those who have come under his ministry—he has a number of young homosexual males living with him—have come from terribly shattered backgrounds where the only love they knew meant going to bed with strangers.[3]

Ed Johnson, in his leaflet, *GAY, But Not Happy!*, confesses that he was using drugs and drinking quite heavily, that he was "becoming a nervous wreck." He says: "If I had to live the rest of my life trapped in this body with its desires and lusts I thought that I would be better off dead. . . . I finally ended up in Hollywood hustling the streets day and night looking and searching. I wa so lonely and confused."[4] From a tract of Greatest Is Love: "I decided it was hopeless and I wanted to die. I started drinking but I didn't like it, so I started dope. I started smoking grass (marijuana) and said that's all but it didn't stop at that. I started snorting smack (Heroin), dropping acid (eating LSD), doing any kind of drope I could get hold of."[5] One "ex-gay" was a 280 pound "sick queen," by his own definition, getting drunk night after night.[6] These confessions are typical of the very sad tales told by people whose "testimonies" are distributed by the "ex-gay" movement.

Confusion about homosexuality abounds throughout the churches and in the "ex-gay" movement. Some of the confusion is as primary as basic diagnostic error. For example, a leaflet from Jesus People USA is entitled: *The Gay Life: A True Story*[7] but it is actually the story of a post-operative transsexual — not a homosexual at all. Others who have been "healed" were also never really homosexual to begin with. They tell of "going gay" as young adults, e.g. after the death of a parent. If these men were not "gay" until adulthood, never having any spontaneous sexual attraction to others of the same sex until adulthood, they were not homosexual in orientation in the first place. A few, indeed, may have been incidentally homosexual in terms of a specific act or may have experienced what is sometimes called "homosexual panic." But there is a big difference between a Kinsey "1" and a Kinsey "6" though such distinctions — to say nothing of the wide middle range — fail to concern advocates of the "ex-gay" movement.

One of the most serious confusions revolves around what can hardly be interpreted as anything else but psychopathological denial. At one level, a person is so disgusted by what he or she believes about homosexuality that it seems not even to be recognized as such.

In many cases, the denial is more deliberate and is on a very conscious level. For example, in one of David Wilkerson's Youth Crusades tracts, *Gay*, a Roger Dean (a pseudonym) gives this testimony: "I still felt and desired like a homosexual, but God's Word said that I was a new creature and I refused to believe anything else. The battle raged so fiercely and screamed for sexual release, but I would not give it any satisfaction." In another Wilkerson tract, *Delivered From Lesbianism*, Deborah LaGanza says: "I started to get revelations through the Holy Spirit of my death with Christ." Then, she writes, (in capital letters): NO MATTER WHAT I WAS FEELING, I told the devil I KNOW I'm a new creature. When I was baptized in water, I prayed, 'No matter what I feel, God, I'm standing on Your Word. I CLAIM what You did on Calvary, Lord. You died for me. I have been delivered. I AM delivered!" She goes on: "Yes, sometimes my body feels like it's on fire, but I know God makes the way of escape through His Word. Not only have I been delivered and set free from drugs, I've been set free from lesbianism. Praise God!" In an anonymously written testimony from Greatest Is Love, somebody states in capital letters: "I WAS GAY BUT JESUS SET ME FREE." He admits: "Myself, it was cold turkey. I was tempted by Satan very severely to go back to my old ways but Jesus kept reminding me I was set free. Jesus gave me the power to overcome." Urging readers to "give Jesus a chance," he claims, "I did and it's wonderful; I am a free man. It's a tough fight but with God on our side all things are possible."

The book, *The Third Sex?,* by Kent Philpott, a Baptist preacher in California, has been hawked around the country by desperate preachers as the book that proves that homosexuals can be spiritually changed into "ex-gays" and heterosexuals.[8] A closer scrutiny of the six cases presented in the book reveals no such thing. Even Philpott acknowledges: "Neither experience — deliverance or Spirit baptism — ends the battle the homosexual faces. This is evident in the interviews. Every one of the six experienced the need to wage a day-by-day fight against the temptations of homosexuality." None of these "ex-gays" became heterosexual in orientation.[9]

While speaking at a meeting of Parents of Gays in New York City, I encountered a mother and father who spoke up to say that the Philpott book proved that homosexuals could be changed. I reminded them of what Philpott himself is honest enough to admit and of my own personal experience counseling with some of Philpott's "cases" while in San Francisco. Not convinced of what I said, these two parents wrote to Philpott's Love in Action ministry. They received a reply from a "Brother Frank" whom they told me was "associated with Kent Philpott." He confirmed that two of the six people now believe "they can be gay and Christian," a third individual "is out of contact with us," and that "the

other two girls in the book are good Christians, loving the Lord, and are not in any type of homosexual activity at all. Regarding the sixth, Brother Frank wrote: "I assure you that he has never fallen."[10] He goes on to say that one of those who had fallen away from the Philpott group "finally saw the error of his ways. Just before he took his own life he wrote a note to Love in Action saying that he did not buy the viewpoint of Dr. Blair and for us to keep on with our ministry just as we had been doing." Are we to believe that people who experience the "ex-gay" miracle then kill themselves? Or rather, do they kill themselves, believing that they *need* that "miracle" and they do not *experience* it, no matter how hard they try. Sadly, this man was convinced that, in his own words to me, "I'm going to hell in a bucket so I'd better get it over with before I sin any more."

An EXIT (Ex-gay Intervention Team) cassette is yet another example of the how-low-I-sank testimony, fear of growing old and fat and unwanted, and the sloppy thinking and dangling claims of the "ex-gay" movement in general. For example, nowhere in the EXIT tape do the "ex-gays" say anything more substantial than that "we used to be gay, now we're happy!" *How* they were "delivered" is not explained. They speak of using power and self-control to curb themselves and then ask that homosexuals "Come to Jesus. He'll clean you up." This is their "way out." They say: "He is offering freedom, deliverance, liberation to all." The weary and the wary must ask: Freedom, yes, but from *what*? Deliverance, yes, but from *what*? Liberation, yes, but from *what*? And, we might ask, deliverance *to* what? Somehow, these questions never quite get handled. At a conference in Oakland and at another in Atlanta, they did admit that the transformation does take a long, long time.[11]

Thus, on the one hand, some self-styled "ex-gays" claim they have been "set free" and "delivered" and on the other hand they admit that they still are "on fire" with very strong temptations to commit homosexual acts, but have, through self-control, refrained from "falling." At best, they are not "ex-gay" at all, but simply homosexuals trying not to follow their homosexual orientation. They are as such, also running the risks of suffering marked negative effects of involuntary sexual abstinence.[12]

What a contrast to the New Testament where, as J. Stafford Wright states: "all recorded faith-healings were virtually instantaneous, and patients did not need after-treatment."[13] Today, even among those who believe in miracle healings of actual medical disorders, this is still a hallmark of the genuine miracle. Testifying about the healing of his four-month-old daughter during a Kathryn Kuhlman "Miracle Service," Richard Owellen (internist on the faculty of the Johns Hopkins University Medical School) writes: ". . . it was purely physical . . . And it was instant. There's no medical term to describe it except the word 'miracle',"[14]

We must recognize, however, that even in the New Testament, not all Christians with even *real* diseases, were healed (e.g., II Tim 4:20). Addressing the question "Why are not *all* healed?" Kathryn Kuhlman wisely replies: "The only honest answer I can give is: I do not know. And I am afraid of those who claim they do know."[15] She speaks of "man's superfluity of zeal" and of "the harm" that is "done in attributing everything to 'lack of faith' on the part of the individual" who does not receive healing.[16] Yet "ex-gay" proponents belittle the faith of those who do not see their way clear to believe in divine intervention for sexual reorientation. Those who remain attracted to people of the same sex are sometimes told that they are not praying hard enough, sincerely enough, faithfully enough, and that they must simply "get down to business" and repent more. They are told that Christ has already done his part and that now it is up to them to die more to self, to die to the flesh, and so on. And all of this in terms of a natural psychosexual development that is a "disorder" in name only.

Unlike those reviewed so far, publicly, not all "ex-gays" even hint at their continued temptations. At least they do not mention such temptations in public lectures, in their tapes, and in their writings. For example, in his cassette testimony, one such "ex-gay" acknowledges that although his homosexuality was not changed immediately after his Christian conversion experience, and not even after a later "surrender to Jesus Christ" when, after two weeks, "I wanted to get laid," he *does* go on to claim that slowly, "I came out on the other side." On *what* other side? He says that he "became a heterosexual" and "no longer wanted to have sex with a man." He claims, in his tape, to be "totally and completely free from homosexuality" and that after a three-month "burning out period . . . I am not a homosexual anymore . . . I am the heterosexual that He wants me to be."[17] Nevertheless, in a luncheon conversation which I had with him well after he had recorded his testimony, on May 17, 1977, he acknowledged continued sexual attraction for men. Somewhat impatiently, he said that, of course he did not know *any ex-gay* who was not still tempted by attractive men. After I confronted him with his strange use of the term "ex-gay" to designate people still sexually attracted to individuals of the same sex, he blurted incredulously: "Do you mean to say I wouldn't be tempted after being a homosexual for all those years?! Of course I see attractive men, but I don't give in to it!" He used the illustration of an alcoholic who, though tempted to drink, did not take a drink and then could say: "But I didn't. Praise the Lord!" I reminded him that alcoholics in AA, for instance, even though they have not had a drink in years, nonetheless till call themselves alcoholics. They are sober, day by day, but they do not call themselves "ex-alcoholics." Later in our conversation, even after he admitted that he and all other "ex-gays" he knew were still sexually attracted to members of the same sex, but that this fact is often kept out of public testimony because churches "force" them to conform to certain expectations about miracles, he repeatedly spoke of himself and others as "ex-gay." He has well-integrated the phrasing.

This tactic is probably at least politically the best from his point of view—at least in the short run. Homophobic churches and churchgoers are really not much interested or impressed with what appear to be complicated distinctions between sets and orientation. According to Clarence Boomsma, chairman of the Christian Reformed Church committee on the homosexual issue, this distinction was the hardest to get across to the churches.[18] To many non-homosexual church members, evidently queers are queers—practicing or not—and that's that. In a recent survey conducted by a research division of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and reported in the conservative, *The Presbyterian Layman*, it was found that "The majority felt the church shouldn't make a distinction between practicing homosexuals and those who have 'strong feelings of physical love for persons of the same sex' but do not engage in homosexual acts."[19] No wonder they call themselves "ex-gay" and testify in public with dangling references to "deliverance" and "liberation." No wonder they make such outlandish claims. If the churches are going to be so demanding, there is going to be continued exaggeration in "ex-gay" claims.

Another self-styled "ex-gay" who testifies to the utter unhappiness in his past also has claimed that he is no longer gay, that God has taken away "the lusts, the desires, the fantasies, and the act."[20] This is quite a sweeping claim. It is one that is being closely examined in light of complaints by several homosexuals who had intended to become "ex-gay" through his ministry. They say that they discovered that his situation is not what he had claimed it to be. Their complaints have been taken to the editors of a Christian periodical for further investigation and reporting.

In spite of all of this, if there really is someone who sincerely believes that he or she has been transformed from homosexual orientation to heterosexual orientation by a spiritual experience, I invite that person to take advantage of the Kinsey offer to validate the claim. If such transformation has occurred and if it can be validated through the Kinsey battery, it must be recognized as something of a miracle.

Apart from testimony which is downright fraudulent, and in the absence of validated evidence of a miracle, how are we to explain phenomena that may be reported with sincerity by some people calling themselves "ex-gay" right after Christian conversion?

First of all, we must be willing to assess the "evidence" with an informed perspective. We must remember that placebo effects (psychologic benefits not accountable in terms of intrinsic therapeutic properties of the "cure"), reflect the guilty person's beliefs, expectations, and the suggestions or claims of dominant preachers and "ex-gay" advocates. Such "healers" engender expectations of release from "the dregs" through which a person is going while trying to handle guilt over being involved in what is seen as "an abomination to God." The psychological state created reinforces the person'e expectations that "Chrst will deliver you" but there is no real effect on the person's psychosexual orientation. Placebo treatment has long been recognized as a phenomenon in situations similar to the "ex-gay" situations.[21] When an individual is told that he or she is going to receive a gift from God, and this is promised by the one who introduced the person to Christ the Savior—or is, at least, a fellow-believer who does not scoff at the "born-again" experience as others do—the suggestion is registered and the expectations are set into motion. A measure of the degree to which some people wish to believe the "ex-gay" phenomenon is the reluctance to see even the blatant fraud in some "ex-gay" ministries. Even after being sexually seduced by an "ex-gay" advocate, some self-loathing homosexuals have chosen not to support evidence against the advocate's claim to being "ex-gay" for fear that it would discredit the "ex-gay" movement and advance the cause of Evangelicals Concerned.[22] Thus, the expectation and the desire to become "ex-gay" is a powerful factor in producing a *sense* of a change, especially when one is told that the alternative to change is, literally, to go to hell.

What seems to be happening with some homosexuals who honestly believe that they are becoming "ex-gay" after conversion to Christ and their new Christian fellowship is not really unusual. I see much the same thing with homosexuals in my "secular" practice of psychotherapy. Both through such therapy and through Christian conversion, homosexuals can move away from lives of low self-esteem and consequent search for ego stroking in fruitless promiscuity toward greater self-acceptance. As people who are not necessarily self-identified Christians—indeed many are areligious or agnostic—learn through therapy to successfully counter beliefs about their supposed sickness and inadequacy which were based in irrationality, they lessen and even eliminate the need to use sex inappropriately, e.g. for non-sexual ego-affirmation. As people experience the love of God, they no longer need to search for love in inappropriate ways, e.g. in superficial and disposable sex. This is not to say that individuals may not lapse into such superficial sexual encounters even after a considerable experience in rational living and/or Christian walk. But as people begin to see that they can associate with others on a basis that is not just genital, either with others who are "getting their heads together" through psychotherapy or with other believers sharing Christian fellowship and the realization of God's love for them, they are opened up to much more meaningful interaction than they have known before. In both cases, they are being met as real persons, not just sex objects, and for perhaps the first time in their lives.

It is easy to misunderstand these newer experiences as evidence of a diminishing homosexuality. In fact, my clients at some point in therapy jokingly ask if I am deviously turning them into ex-homosexuals. What they are experiencing is a diminishing of the use of genital sex for non-sexual purposes. Sooner or later, if indeed there is ever any real doubt, the person realizes that the authentic

homosexual orientation remains intact. Sex can now be seen as something to use sexually and as an expression of affection. However, a person who falls under the propaganda of the "ex-gay" movement can begin to see the remaining sexual interest as the same old temptation to commit an abomination in the sight of God. It will depend on what the individual believes.

There have always been those who would presume to speak for the Lord words the Lord has not spoken (Deut 18:20). The Deuteronomic test of the authenticity of the words spoken might well be applied today: "What a prophet proclaims in the name of the Lord, which is not fulfilled and does not happen, that is a message to which the Lord did not give utterance; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; have no fear of him." (Deut 18:22). The New Testament gives a clue, too. Jesus promised that when we seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, all things that we really do need will be ours as well (Matt 6:33). He also promised that anything asked in His name, according to His will, He will do (John 14:14). Serious questions of the *need* to become "ex-gay" follow the "unanswered" prayers of millions of God's children.

In view of what we have learned about the failures of the "ex-gay" ministries and in view of what is known to be the lack of any successful re-orientation therapy, it is most cruel to continue to hold out the promise of release from homosexual orientation to those who are taught that their homosexuality is an abomination to God. Yet, such false hope is being peddled everywhere. Harold Lindsell, editor of *Christianity Today*, stated unequivocally: "There is hope for the homosexual. He can be delivered just as adulterers, drunkards, and idolaters can."[23] He has intensified his attack on homosexuals and continues his "Battle for the Bible" on the backs of all homosexuals whom he is certain "will not inherit the kingdom of God."[24] Instead of continuing to give credence to the "ex-gay" movement and its empty promises, Lindsell would do better to take a dose of his own advice from another context. Writing that an "economy of miracles" suggests they are rare, he asserts: "The miracle business is getting out of hand. The time ha come for evangelicals to adopt a cautious attitude toward extravagbant claims and to reject accounts that are unsubstantiated. Common sense and belief in miracles should go hand in hand."[25] Failure to understand homosexuality in terms of deep-seated psychosexual orientation instead of simply voluntary acts of rebellion probably accounts for Lindsell's not applying his own good advice to the "ex-gay miracles" he promotes through *Christianity Today*. Apparently, "ex-gay" stories, so wished-to-be-true, are hard not to believe.

Dr. Blair, a psychotherapist, is Director of The Homosexual Community Counseling Center in New York. He is an alumnus of Westminster Theological Seminary and Dallas Theological Seminary, and is President of Evangelicals Concerned.

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1. Pinions, *December, 1976, p. 1.*
2. *Roger Grindstaff,* Deliverance from Homosexuality *cassette, side one, "Testimony."*
3. *Personal conversation with author.*
4. *Ed Johnson,* GAY, But Not Happy!! *(El Monte, Ca: Leaflet Evangelism, n.d.).*
5. *Anonymous,* Gay No More (Goodville, Pa: Greatest Is Love, n.d.).
6. David E. Ostrander, Break Loose from Bondage *(No other reference information furnished on leaflet).*
7. The Gay Life: A True Story *(Chicago: Jesus People USA Prod., 1975).*
8. *Kent Philpott,* The Third Sex? *(Plainfield, NJ: Logos, 1975).*
9. *Just prior to publication of this booklet, word was received from one of the "cases" that none of the six is still connected with the Love in Action minstry.*
10. *Letter from "Brother Frank" to the two parents, April 1, 1977 enclosed with letter to author, April 25.*
11. *Eyewitness accounts in Atlanta and Oakland.*
12. *Cf. E. Imielinski, "Sexual Abstinence, Neuroses, and Perversion,"* Psychiatrie Neurologie und Medizinische Psychologie, *1965, 17.*
13. *J. Stafford Wright in Everett F. Harrison (ed.)* Baker's Dictionary of Theology (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1960), p. 212.
14. Richard Owellen, "The Day God's Mercy Took Over," in Kathryn Kuhlman, Nothing Is Impossible with God *(New York: Harcourt Brace Javonovich, 1974), p. 66.*
15. *Kathryn Kuhlman,* God Can Do It Again *(Englewood Cliffs: Prentice—Hall, 1969), p. 251.*
16. *Kathryn Kuhlman,* I Believe in Miracles *(Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1962), p. 212.*
17. *From cassette testimony furnished by "ex-gay."*
18. *Information furnished by Clarence Boomsma during meeting of the Christian Association for Psychological Studies, Niagara University, June 26, 1977.*
19. The Presbyterian Layman, *June, 1977.*
20. *From printed material furnished by "ex-gay."*
21. *Cf. e.g.: J. D. Frank, L. H. Gliedman, S. D. Nash Jr., "Patients' Expectancies and Relearning as Factors Determining Improvement in Psychotherapy."* American Journal of Psychiatry, *1959, 115, pp. 961-968; J. Meltzoff & M. Kornreich, (eds.)* Research in Psychotherapy *(New York: Atherton, 1970), p. 258; S. Fischer, "The Placebo Reactor,"* Diseases of the Nervous System, *1967, 28, pp. 510-515.*
22. *Telephone conversation with a reporter from a major Christian periodical.* (Ed. note: since publication of Dr. Blair's booklet, it has been learned that Guy Charles, Director of evangelical ex-gay "Liberation Through Jesus Christ," has resigned in face of such allegations, and the organization dissolved.)
23. Torrence Breeze, *September 29, 1973.*
24. Christianity Today, *May 20, 1977.*
25. Christianity Today, *March 4, 1977, p. 5.*

EDITORIAL

F JAY DEACON

Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a person's foes will be those of their own household. The one who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and she who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. She who finds her life will lose it, and she who loses her life for my sake will find it.

—Matthew 10

A TELEGRAM DISRUPTED the orderly lives of Metropolitan Community Churches everywhere this Fall. And whoever we are, or wherever we are, in this communion of people seeking to find our identity in Christ's presence in this world, we have all, every one of us, been affected by what happened.

What happened began quietly, hidden from the view of nearly everyone. What happened was, at first, an unsettled state of mind, an inner pain. The founder of our spiritual liberation movement felt such pain, such profound, inner disturbance, disturbance and spiritual discomfort, but he couldn't name its source. But, as I learned from Elder Nancy Wilson whom I reached in Detroit, he knew his unconscious burden must become conscious. And so, he began an ancient religious discipline that is more familiar to people with an intensely experientially-oriented faith than to most of us intellectually, cerebrally-oriented New Englanders. He fasted.

Now a fast in itself is enough to disturb many of us. The very idea of a fast upsets us. Because a fast, as we see it, is going too far. As they say, you have to draw the line somewhere, and that's fanaticism.

It may be. But if it is, then we had better renounce our tradition today, right now. The heritage of faith, the prophetic spirit, eastern religions and our biblical faith, are, by that definition, fanatical.

The undisputable fact is that fasting is one of those time-honored spiritual disciplines that enable people to do what the Quakers call "center down." That is, to relax and lower the energy-level at which our consciousness operates, and to allow the life within us, the unconscious content of our lives, where our most real and inner perceptions and convictions and sense of significance and urgency and value and truth are to be found, to rise through the threshhold of consciousness. It is a way to come to know the truth and the life that lies hidden within us. It is a way to concentrate our energies on the inner voice of God in our lives. It may not work for you, for every one of us is so uniquely individual that we must find our own way to get in touch with the Presence that brings light and truth into our lives. But it worked for Troy, and within three days, he knew why he was fasting.

For some time, a massive fear campaign had been gathering steam in California. The central figure in the new wave of trouble was State Senator

John Briggs, a Republican who wants to be governor, who campaigned with Anita Bryant in Florida in the successful drive to rip the human community apart there and to make scapegoats of gay people, depriving them of their human rights.

The Senator was trying to make it illegal for a gay people to teach school in his state, and when the state legislature turned back his bill to do just that, he "took it to the people," in the populist sense of the phrase. He initiated a referendum signature campaign, igniting the ready fuel of popular bigotry and spiritual bankruptcy.

From an air mattress outside the Los Angeles Federal Building, Troy Perry announced:

"I am preparing to fast to the death, if necessary, to help educate the American public to the fact that gay men and women are oppressed, are a minority, and that Senator Briggs and Anita Bryant would like to make us scapegoats for what they perceive as the ills of society. I will not eat again until $100,000 is raised to help stop this initiative." No one who knew him well could have taken his Gandhiesque statement lightly. He went on:

"Senator Briggs would imply that gay school teachers would, if possible, convert children to a homosexual lifestyle and are potential child molesters . . . I and other gay people ask President Jimmy Carter to immediately appoint a Presidential Commission to study and report to the nation on the physical and sexual abuse of children, and who the perpetrators of these acts are. I am asking religious leaders in California and across the length and breadth of America to sign a letter of conscience, affirming their stand on human rights but specifically the rights of gay people to live at peace with their neighbors, to work for a living without fear of discrimination, and to have the same human and civil rights which every American citizen should be able to expect."

It was not Troy's first fast. Los Angeles still remembers the time when, in 1971, he fasted "until someone, somewhere in some arm of government, whether national, state, county, or local, came to say that they wanted to have a meaningful discussion, to say that they wanted to know about the unjust laws and the police and court abuses directed specifically at homosexuals."

There is nothing new about fasting for justice. Here are the words of the one who knew fasting best.

"While I was still groping and unable to see my way clearly, the light came to me. Unbidden and all by themselves the words came to my lips." And so, on March 15, 1917, Mohandus K. Gandhi announced his first public fast —one of the seventeen that he would undertake throughout his long life, keeping all India holding its breath for his life. Underpaid and abused mill workerst at Ahmedabad were striking, under his leadership, for a 35 percent raise. The strike had gone on for a month, Gandhi had called upon the workers to hold out for their own dignity even if it meant hunger and hardship, and their spirits were sagging.

It was a confused situation that Gandhi would avoid talking about later in life. Many were angry with him. The mill owners might capitulate now, not because of the justice of the cause but because of their affection for him, their concern for his well-being, or even their fear of the consequences and their culpability if he should die. He tried to convince himself that his fast was true to his principles of voluntary self-suffering, but he could not overcome the feeling and guilt that he was merely manipulating others with guilt. In fact, Hindus often used fasts to exert pressure on their adversaries. Gandhi said *his* fasts were intended to bring moral pressure on his own people and friends and not for any selfish end. But he always wondered about it.

Gandhi lived to see his dream nearly die. By the time of his assassination in 1948, he had lost his influence in India, and he was confused and torn.

Many Indians had come to see Gandhi as a god. He was worshipped, and miraculous stories were told about him. But his revolutionary movement was interrupted by long periods of confusion and always a lot of opposition and controversy. Some of his followers who survived him became very peculiar fanatics.

And many, many times during Gandhi's long struggle, his followers must have known that queasy feeling, wondering whether they had chosen the right issues, the right strategies, operated out of the right motives.

That's how I felt the week of The Telegram. I felt it when I called our central office in Los Angeles, and got an emotionally agitated voice on the other end who didn't want to tell me anything about the background of the fast—couldn't tell me what the money was for—knew nothing about the letters of conscience or to whom they were to be directed—and challenged my right to ask any questions, constantly reminding me that Troy Perry might die. I felt bludgeoned with guilt.

And I was profoundly upset when she kept insisting, "God spoke to him and told him to do it. I know he did."

I tried vainly to point out that one individual's inner sense of spiritual guidance is not in itself persuasive to people who recall that Anita said that, too.

Because anyone can *say* God told them so-and-so, and I believe deeply that if it is true, and if our sense of God's voice within us is true and correct, then an act done in response to what we believe is required of us will speak for itself, and prove itself.

And it is always a tragic mistake to make a god of any leader. Not the least of the tragedy is the violence it does to the leader him/herself. Just as Mohandus Gandhi never welcomed the awesome title "Mahatma," so this prophetic community ought to beware of laying the oppressive weight of the word "prophet" too heavily on one

prophetic spirit. It must never be assumed that because Gandhi said it, or the Pope said it, or Troy said it, that it is right.

But beyond the strategy and the time and the place and Senator Briggs and Los Angeles politics, there is something about this act that must shake us and move us, and disturb us.

Troy has proved himself a disturber of the peace in the finest prophetic tradition.

And we've covered over and painted over our pain, the discomfort that calls upon us to reach out and live boldly and dare to grow and evolve with God's creation and break out of the boundaries that have made our lives small. We've painted it over with a seductive phony peace that doesn't want to be disturbed by the greatest disturber of the peace of all time, Christ Jesus.

But whether we like it or not, the fact is that we are caught up in an ultimate struggle that challenges all of our energies and promises the actual experience in our lives of the Spirit of God and the Domain of God as it transforms the world and transforms, with it, our lives.

Troy Perry's fast, as a "centering-down" experience of entering into his own most inner experience of God's presence and truth in his life, opened him to feel and know and be moved and shaken in a new and disturbing way by the realities that lay around him.

But it turned to a second phase, the kind of experience that makes us not simply individuals, but a people, a community. The spiritual liberation movement Troy has been instrumental in beginning comes now into our lives as the disturbing call, and presence, of Christ. We are afraid of our call, afraid to be disturbed. But we must be.

In this act, he became the living and suffering center for the conflict that involves us all, and we are enabled to see it and feel it and know its urgency. His fast was an overflow of the vital passion of life.

Not unlike the time in June, 1929, when the British Government attempted to crush the spirit of the Indian people with a series of stunningly unfair laws and taxes that ruined the country's salt industry. After many false starts and mistakes, and before many more times of confusion and mistaken strategy, Gandhi informed the British government that if the laws were not repealed, that on the eleventh day of the month, he would defy the law. With hundreds of followers, he marched 200 miles to the sea. The authorities completely underestimated the symbolic power of Gandhi's action. He had mobilized the entire nation's spiritiaul energies. He was arrested. Scores of policemen rushed upon the advancing marchers and methodically struck them down. They offered no resistance, but their voluntary self-sacrifice changed the course of history.

Christ enters our lives, to radicalize us. Christ does not offer us a false peace, but the kind that wells up from within, in the midst of struggle.

May this act speak to us. May the disturbing Presence of Christ bring us its peace by disrupting our own artificially peaceful lives, our comfortable affluence and spiritual poverty, the fearful clinging to yesterday's truth that makes us false today, and thus become the kind of act spoken of by the prophet Isaiah—

"Is not this the sort of fast that pleases me—to break unjust fetters and undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke?" ■

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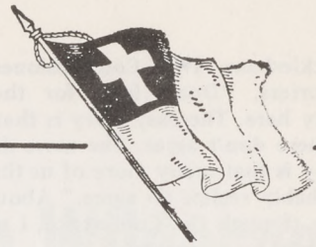

Women Make History in Houston, Texas

Rev. Chappelle, Associate Pastor at All Saints MCC in West Hollywood and MCC West Bay in Santa Monica, CA, was a member of the ten woman team from Pacifica Radio that covered the IWY National Conference.

by the Rev. Lucia Chappelle

F. CARTER SMITH

If the two or three conservative-looking couples who boarded Continental Flight 50 on Thursday morning, November 17, were not aware that they were on their way to the site of the International Women's Year (IWY) National Conference, they must have imagined that they were about to be hijacked to Amazon Nation. The women of Los Angeles -- all sizes, shapes, colors, and orientations -- were headed for Houston!

We were fogged in for about an hour and a half. Each woman's private expectations for the event intensified and merged into a collective anticipation that became almost unbearable. Tears of joy/anxiety mixed with the applause and cheers when the captain finally announced, "Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Continental Flight 50, destination Houston, Texas."

National women's conferences were mandated by the International Women's Year Conference, sponsored by the United Nations in 1975. A Presidential Order established a National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year in this country. This Commission, chaired by Bella Abzug of New York, was responsible for organizing the State Meetings and the National Women's Conference.

By Thursday afternoon, hundreds of the 20,000 expected delegates and observers were arriving at the Hyatt Regency and Houston Sheraton Hotels. Reservation difficulties plagued both hotels, leaving most of these women without accomodations for a day and a half. As IWY Commissioners chased hotel officials around the Hyatt lobby, I wondered if the latter were graduates of the Ambassador School of Hotel Management in Washington, D.C.!

The situation fanned the flames of the political tensions that began at the State Meetings. Rumors of sabotage piled as high as the suitcases that filled every space unfit for a human being. However, if some conspiracy was a-foot, the plotters inadvertantly created the vironment for the initial steps toward the unity that eventually swept the Conference. Disasters have a way of pulling people together.

At the opening press conference, Jill

Ruckleshaus, IWY Commissioner, told reporters, "Don't look for the easy story here. The easy story is that all of us here don't agree. The more difficult story is that many more of us than you probably realize *do* agree." About midway through the Conference, I saw the truth in her statement.

During the State Meetings, a great deal of conflict arose between feminist and anti-feminist women. This received much attention in the press. Feminist delegates worked hard to turn the right-wing sponsored threat to their advantage. Perhaps for the first time since the early 1950's, moderate, liberal, and leftist contingents united to place their common goal above their ideologies. The common goal was to pass the National Plan of Action.

The proposed National Plan of Action was the IWY Commission's compilation of the resolutions passed by the State Meetings. Despite the aforementioned conflicts, the majority of the State Meetings did submit progressive resolutions, making the Plan a fairly adequate statement of American feminist thought. All agreed that such a statement had to be made at the National Conference, but the differing perspectives among feminists presented a complex set of obstacles.

Eleven delegation chairpersons, convinced that passage of the Plan was not impossible, became the epoxy for an amazing political mosaic. As the Pro-Plan Caucus, they took upon themselves the task of forging the sympathetic delegations into a unified front. The members of this caucus became the Negotiators, smoothing out the differences among such groups as the Black, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American Caucuses, the Disabled Women's Caucus, the Lesbian Caucus, ad confusio. They became the Choreographers, orchestrating every action on the Conference floor. They led the greatest victory of coalition politics I have ever seen.

After the resounding passage of the resolutions on the Equal Rights Amendment and Minority Women, there was no real doubt in my mind that the resolution on Sexual Preference would go through. It was not just the fact that the resolutions passed, but the spirit in which they passed. The pro-ERA statement given by Susan B. Anthony, grand niece of the suffragist, and Coretta Scott King's leading the Conference in singing "We Shall Overcome" produced an emotional unity that was far beyond being broken.

I was not afraid that the resolution would fail, but I was uneasy about what would be said during the discussion. When a Pro-Life delegate got up after the passage of the Reproductive Freedom resolution and screamed, "This conference is packed with man-hating, baby-burning lesbians!", I turned to a friend and said, "My Lord, whatwill they say about us when it's our turn?"

As the time approached, lesbian observers brought in helium-filled balloons with the message, 'We Are Everywhere'. The balloons were spread around the Convention Center, appearing in all the least expected places. Some anti-feminists may still be getting over the shock of realizing for the first time that, truly, we were everywhere at that conference!

One of the first delegates to speak on the issue was Betty Friedan, author of *The Feminine Mystique* and long-time advocate of the separation of the lesbian and women's movements. She personally "buried the hatchet", and called for the reunion of the movements. NOW president Ellie Smeal echoed Friedan's sentiments. The overwhelming vote to adopt the Sexual Preference resolution signaled a new age in the fight for Human Rights.

I did not realize the enormity of what had occurred until I spoke to the Rev. Jeri Ann Harvey, Pastor of MCC of the Resurrection in Houston, later that night. With tears in her eyes she told me, "I was watching on TV and all I could think about was that 20 years ago . . . I never thought such a thing could happen in my lifetime."

Since the first Woman's Rights Convention in 1848, and its daughter, the Woman Suffrage Convention of 1888, women have been attempting in fits and starts to affirm their equality with men. The contemporary rekindling of feminist energy displayed in Houston may well be the final push that will bring the dreams of our foremothers in the struggle into reality. How fitting for Susan Anthony to have written to Elizabeth Cady Stanton in 1902,". . .Well little dreamed. . .than half a century later we would be compelled to leave the finish of the battle to another generation of women. But, there is an army of them, where we were but a handful."

I hope that as the battle progresses, MCC feminists' work in the sacred arena will help reinforce the accomplishments of secular feminists and vice versa. The lesson of Houston was that we must seek out the connections that bind us together, using our diverse viewpoints to bring depth to the entire picture. Our effectiveness here, lies in our never becoming so compartmentalized that we find no worth in such connections.

The Houston Conference ended with singer-songwriter Margie Adam leading the conferees in singing "We Shall Go Forth". And we shall. ■

Jewish Convention Passes Resolution

adapted from *Newsletter*
Beth Chayim Chadashim
Los Angeles, CA, January, 1978

At the recent national convention of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations held in San Francisco, resolutions were approved in a variety of areas: Native Americans, the handicapped, energy, the rights of homosexuals, child abuse and neglect, religious rights in Israel, missionaries and deprogramming, and on other issues and concerns. The most significant resolutions

for gay Jews, and for people sympathetic to, and supportive of, their struggles, was the one dealing with human rights for homosexuals.

From the beginning of the debate, representatives of Beth Chayim Chadashim (the Los Angeles Temple) felt that the resolution was in real trouble. These representatives – Jerry Krieger, Steven Kassler, and Gary Vogel – realized that a statement had to be made if gay rights were to be approved by the

Reform Jewish community. Gary Vogel was recognized by the Chair, and read the following statement:

"My name is Gary Vogel and I am from Beth Chayim Chadashim, the only member of the UAHC that has an outreach to the gay community.

"Yesterday, ~~while~~ I heard from this floor the concerns that if this group approves this resolution, they will advocate homosexuality as another acceptable life style, and that this may endanger the family and Jewish life. Although we do not know why some people are gay while others are not, we do realize that there is no choice. You are or you are not gay.

"The Kinsey Report indicates that 10 to 15 percent of the population of the United States is gay. That means 20 to 30 million Americans are gay. With that number in mind, it would be impossible for any of you to say you know no gay people.

"There are many parallels between the gay struggle for equality and that of the Jew. If this resolution does not pass, I feel some people in our Congregation will feel betrayed by this body. But, as our Temple slogan reads 'Jewish, Gay, and Proud', they will quickly realize that we are Jews first, and our faith and love of Torah cannot be weakened because of the defeat of this resolution.

"But this Body does have the power to inform the Anita Bryants of this land that we, as Reform Jews, will not and cannot tolerate discrimination of gay men and women. On August 1, 1977, Dear Abby had the following article in her column:

'First, they came for the Jews,
And I did not speak out
For I was not Jewish.

'Then they came for the Catholics,
And I did not speak out
For I was not Catholic.

'Then they came for the Gays,
And I did not speak out
For I was not gay.

'And then, they came for me,
And there was nobody left
To speak out for anybody.'

"Today, you have the chance to speak out, and I urge you to pass this resolution."

The resolution was approved, and congratulations on its passage were extended to the representatives by people who knew them at the convention, and by people who had come to know them through their courageous testimony in favor of the resolution. ■

Voices in the Wilderness

NEWS AND NOTES THAT TOUCH ON OUR MINISTRIES

The Religion Newswriters Association (RNA), composed of reporters of religion for the USA's newspapers, magazines, and journals, has selected the conflict in the Episcopal Church over the ordination of women priests as the top religion news story for 1977. The RNA's number two selection was the issue of homosexuality. Citing that this issue is significant not only to the Episcopal dispute (because of the controversy surronding the ordination of an avowed lesbian to the Episcopal priesthood) but to the religious community at large due to the religious elements of Anita Bryant's campaign against gay rights, and struggle many churches have had in regard to this issue.

In 1975, the North American Coalition for Human Rights in Korea was organized by church related groups to educate church people about the Korean situation. The coalition communicates the latest news from Korea concerning political prisoners and activities of resistance groups, as well as supplying background data about Korea. If you prefer further information, write:

North American Coalition for
Human Rights in Korea
Room 1538
475 Riverside Drive
New York, NY 10027

The United Presbyterian Office of Information has said that the top denominational story for 1977 was the question of "whether or not the church should approve the ministerial ordination of avowed, practicing homosexuals." This issue is to be debated at the May, 1978 meeting of the United Presbyterian General Assembly in San Diego, California.

Internal Revenue Service spokespersons have cited regulations which state that a church can lose its tax exempt status if it "participates or intervenes directly or indirectly, in any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office." This statement was issued in light of the admission of the pastor of the St. Paul Baptist Church in Los Angeles that he had been making contributions with church funds "for years" to the campaigns of California state Attorney General Evelle Younger.

IN 1975 the U. S. Department of Labor filed a complaint against the Pacific Union Conference of the Seventh Day Adventist Church alleging violation of the Fair Labor Standards Act. The basis of the complaint was that the church did not pay women and men teachers and administrators equally for equal work. The line of defense used by the church was the argument that the suit represented unconstitutional government interference in religion. The church has since paid $650,000 to settle the charges that it discriminated against its women employees, and the government will use the funds for back pay to California teachers and administrators affected by the church's policies during the years 1972 - 1974. All funds not claimed by eligible persons will revert to the U. S. treasury.

DEBORAH'S SONG

ARTICLES BY AND FOR FEMINIST WOMEN AND MEN

Anger and Meekness Reconciled

by Susan Redman

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DAUGHTERS OF SARAH
November / December 1977

AS MY THINKING led more and more towards feminism, I began getting in touch with the anger inside of me. I bridled at male dominated institutions that limited the potential of my sisters and myself. I burned at the injustice of religious groups who teach women to stay in their kitchens raising dough and give them small say about spending it. I resented those who have sought to ridicule the women's movement and split its ranks.

And as I began recognizing my anger, I also tried to resolve it in positive ways. As a child I learned never to reveal my anger. I kept my anger stuffed inside and I held it down by stuffing my mouth with food. I learned that a Christian is supposed to be meek. For me being meek meant doing as I was told, being submissive, taking orders from others without question. I would hear the beatitude "blessed are the meek," and it did not speak to me at all.

Since I identified my anger I have wanted to worship about it. I need to hear a sermon on the positive use of anger. I want to celebrate being angry and recognize the use of anger-energy for creative change. I want to discover songs that acknowledge the place of anger in our lives.

First, I decided to study the biblical understanding of anger. I wanted to ignore that verse about meekness, but it bothered me. I knew I was not being faithful to scripture; yet I did not think I could be both angry and meek. I had not liked myself as a meek, passive, submissive person. I *do* like who I am becoming, a person able to express anger. How could I reconcile these two seemingly opposite concepts?

I started with the dictionary and found two definitions of meek. The first is a person who is patient and mild, not inclined to anger and resentment. The second meaning was the only one I had learned: a meek person is tamely submissive, easily imposed upon.

I searched further. In *The Beatitudes for Everyman [sic]* by William Barclay I found new light. Barclay has studied the Hebrew and Greek origins of the words we have translated meek.

**IT IS RIGHT
TO BE ANGRY;
IT IS NOT RIGHT
TO ALLOW YOUR ANGER
TO CAUSE YOU TO SIN.**

The Hebrew word "anaw" refers to the person who obediently accepts God's guidance. This may sound like part of the dictionary's second definition, but it goes further. The dictionary does not identify to whom we are submissive and obedient, but the Bible clearly does. "No one can serve two masters; for either they will hate one and love the other, or they will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and Mammon (Luke 16:13). If we allow the customs of society to govern us we cannot truly serve God. If we submit ourselves to the dictates of men and male power structures we are not serving God. (Barclay)

The Greek word "praus" which has been translated meek continues the Hebrew meaning of obedience and adds to it. Barclay uses Aristotle's method of virtue being the mean between two extremes. The word "praus" describes the person who can balance excessive anger and excessive angerlessness—the person who feels anger at the right time, for the right reasons and against the right persons. Let us briefly look at these criteria:

When is the right time to feel anger and deal with it? At the time of provocation. Ephesians 4:26 says, "Never let the sun set on your anger." Verse 25 advises, "Even if you are angry, you must not sin." It is right to be angry; it is not right to allow your anger to cause you to sin, to alienate yourself from God. Held-in anger is like an internal cancer. It destroys the vital organs of the person who holds it.

Secondly, we need to ask why we are angry, and what purpose our anger will serve. We know that God often expressed anger. God expressed anger at injustice and unrighteousness. The prophet Amos is one of many expressions of God's anger at humans mistreating other humans. As beings created in God's image, called to live in God's likeness, I believe that we are called to be angry when we witness injustice. We need to follow Jesus' example. Jesus ignored personal slights and injuries but he reacted angrily in Mark 3:5 when the Pharisees wanted to make the Law more important than healing a person. If I fight only for my rights, I am selfish. If I fight for the rights of all women, all oppressed people, I am serving God.

Thirdly, who are the right persons to be angry against? Sometimes in our age of giant institutions it is difficult to identify the true culprits. The buck is passed and few people want to be on the receiving end of anger. Women who confront the institutional church with its sexist attitudes often find the buck passed back to Paul, who certainly is not here to defend himself. I know women who have faithfully followed the method of confrontation outlined in Matthew 18:15-17. They have confronted privately, then with a few witnesses, and often have been treated patronizingly and have been lorded over by the men in authority. How does the institutional church react when confronted with women who speak angrily of injustice and oppression? Women are called to be angry when they see some men using their positions in the institution to lord it over women, minorities and other oppressed groups. I believe that as Christian women we are called to

IF I FIGHT
ONLY FOR MY RIGHTS,
I AM SELFISH.
IF I FIGHT
FOR THE RIGHTS
OF ALL WOMEN,
ALL OPPRESSED PEOPLE,
I AM SERVING GOD.

do our best to identify the right persons in all of our churches and other institutions, and to confront them in love.

The meek person is s/he who can be angry for the right reasons and in the right way. The anger is not meant to harm and destroy, but to build up. Righteous anger is strong and gentle. Once our consciousness has been raised and, in Helen Reddy's words, "We know too much to go back and pretend," we are called to confront others with the injustices that enslave us all.

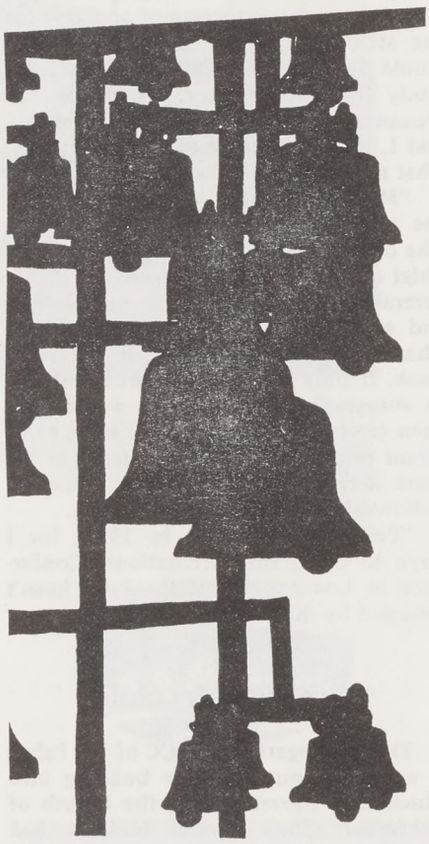
Moses is identified as a meek person (Numbers 12:3). Think of it—Moses who angrily confronted the Pharoah, whose strength and courage led our forebears through the wilderness. Moses was meek! He was submissive and obedient—but to God alone.

I suppose then, that I can be meek also. I will try to be. That word, once anathema, now has new meaning for me.

Rise up, sisters, meek and angry, and confront injustice for God's sake.

Susan Redman is active on the Task Force on Women in Church and Society of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ, and is a student at United Seminary (UCC) in the twin cities.

Subscriptions to *Daughters of Sarah* are $ 2.50 for six issues. Write to them at: 5104 North Christiana, Chicago, Illinois 60625.



GAY DUCKS AND SEAGULLS?

Recent newspaper articles report that seagulls on Santa Barbara Island off the California coast, and ducks at Stanley Park in Vancouver, B.C. Canada are exhibiting "homosexual characteristics." The seagulls, it seems, have developed lesbian relationships, while the ducks, Mallard and Wood Ducks, have opted for gay male liaisons.

Researchers have attributed this recently-observed behavior to environmental conditions; overpopulation of the male or female population among the birds.

This may be true, (as opposed to something which has been going on for some time, but has not been "observed" until recently), however, if the birds exercise the option of sexual preference — for whatever reason — then why such to-do when humans choose to do the same?

On Relating

How often we have heard the following statement in more or less these words: "It would be better if the women weren't here." The context in which this statement is usually made is a social gathering at which the gay men outnumber the gay women.

The trouble with this statement is the overt sexism implied by such a remark, and the desire to remove from our midst one half of nature's dyad. What could be more disasterous that to cut oneself off completely from a necessary and important faction of humanity?

From a social point of view, the organizational aspect of the gay community in general underscores the polarity between the sexes: opposites shall not meet; certainly not attract.

By demanding this polarization and contributing to its functional aspect, relationships between people tend to be reduced to a purely sexual level—one which caters only to the physical, and leaves no room for the creative interaction from which beautiful and supportive friendships may spring, from which many important things may be learned.

The social and intellectual aspects of the male-female relationship can indeed be rewarding. Women are sexually different from men — an obvious fact. But it should be kept in mind that the differences are what create an interesting interaction. The non-sexual side of a relationship can provide a context in which people do not need to feel the necessity to compete, but only if they allow themselves the freedom to relate as persons and not as sexual opponents.

As for gay men, their sexual preference is clear. The tension surrounding the usual male-female relationship can therefore be put to rest. Gay men hopefully can then escape from the imposed societal pressures with which they are so familiar and begin a dialogue conducive to understanding and development. The absence of this sexual competition would seemingly allow gay men to overcome the overt manifestations of sexism and to begin to function on a more aware level.

adapted from *The Branch*
MCC Boulder, Colorado
December, 1977

THE FELLOWSHIP FAMILY

NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT

Metropolitan Community Church services were held for the first time in New Haven on August 21, 1977, under the leadership of Co-Worship Coordinators Beverly Lett and Ken Theriault; the work was started as a parish ministry of MCC Hartford.

In October the group received permission to hold worship services in the building of the First Methodist Church at 425 College Street in that city.

Christmas Eve services were held in New Haven, with members of the Hartford church attending to share this event with the new group.

As news of this new MCC congregation spreads, interested people have begun to attend from as far away as Bridgeport, and even Stamford, Connecticut. The group recently held a "congregational feedback and organizational meeting". This resulted in a sharing of responsibilities among the members of the group, who also expressed a consensus of support and satisfaction with the style and direction of this new congregation.

MCC News
MCC Hartford, Connecticut
December, 1977

AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND

A letter from the Rev. Peter D. Alexander-Smith gives us some insight into how God is moving among our brothers and sisters in New Zealand.

"Our outreach has produced MCC contact-persons in Whangerie, Napier, and Hawera which are all country towns, and we have a prayer group going in New Plymouth which could well soon be a Study Group.

"In Auckland we had some drop in numbers, but this enabled me to do some real work with the 25 or so remaining, and we had a weekend retreat together to study just what we are doing.

"We really went flat out for recruiting interest during this 'ingathering' period and this has stirred up interested people, and we know we will go from strength to strength in the loving power of the Lord.

"We have six people from Auckland attending the District Conference in late December in Adelaide and we are all looking forward to that, for we do feel cut off a bit. The six include a Salvation Army officer who is 'coming out' and has already given his intention of applying for the MCC ministry; an 18 year old who would like to do a full time course of study for the ministry; his spouse; our treasurer, and my spouse, Damian, and I. We are all going on the same plane. That plane will never be the same again.

"Many thanks for your letter and for the two boxes of books and pamphlets. The original order of Dr. Pittenger's pamphlet did arrive and they were bought by several people interested in our church, and some went to farther away places. Thank you for sending the copy of Troy's book. If only you had thought to get him to autograph it! (I probably would have been tempted to auction it at some exorbitant price.) There is great interest in the book here and we do hope the Universal Fellowship Press can reprint it soon.

"Perhaps we'll meet in 1979, for I hope to be at the International Conference in Los Angeles, if the Lord hasn't returned by then -- Marantha."

FORT MYERS, FLORIDA

The congregation of MCC of the Palms is excited about the new building into which they moved during the month of December. Their former building had grown too small to meet their needs, and they considered themselves fortunate and blessed to find the new facilities in downtown Ft. Myers.

The new meeting place is a second floor suite of rooms in an office building with two well-lighted entrances. The architecture is modern, and aside from some fresh paint and a little cleaning, the building was ready for immediate use. The facilities include a large room for the sanctuary, office space, a meeting room, and a room for social activities. The congregation is installing cabinets in the kitchen area of the social room, and a new altar-table (complete with linens) and pulpit are being designed for the sanctuary.

* * * * * *

On September 13, 1977, Brother George Covington, Worship Coordinator for MCC of the Palms, was accepted as a member of the Lee County Ministerial Association. Brother Covington reports that he was warmly welcomed by the other members. Because of this, MCC of the Palms has received a good deal of community attention. Brother Covington was interviewed on the "Sun Coast" program of WBBH, Channel 20 television, and also appeared on WINK, Channel 11, giving the "Morning Meditation" during the week of December 5 through 11.

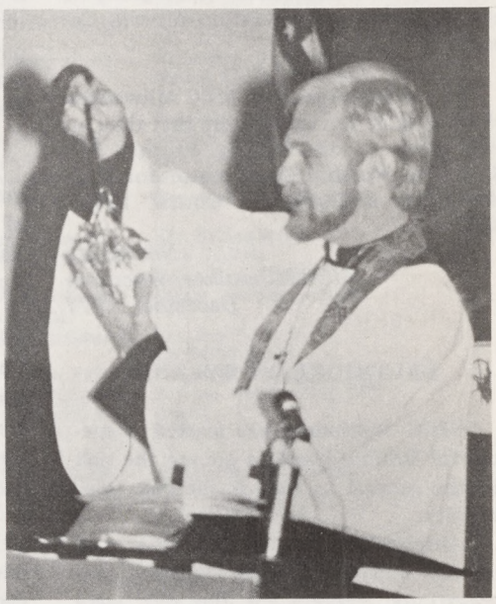
MCC of the Palms' project of providing clothing, games, and other useful articles to the patients of the G. Pierce Woods Hospital was widely covered by WINK radio and the *News Press* newspaper.

Brother Covington and his spouse Earl were invited to attend the Ministerial Association Christmas dinner on December 16th; at their persuasion, the association changed the word "wife" to "spouse" on the invitations!

The Palm Leaflet
MCC of the Palms
Fort Myers, Florida
December, 1977

Members and friends of MCC in the Valley take down the cross which hung over the altar in the old church building.
— photo by Peter, photographer

The Valley church's new facility for worship and congregational activities is a former American Legion Hall on Cahuenga Boulevard in North Hollywood.
— photo by Peter, photographer



MCC in the Valley pastor, the Rev. Randall Cypherd.
— photo by Peter, photographer

NORTH HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA

Thanksgiving Day, 1977, was a milestone in the life of the congregation of MCC in the Valley. Pastor Randy Cypherd and the Valley congregation joined together with their guests from All Saints MCC in West Hollywood-Beverly Hills, and West Bay MCC in Santa Monica, and these three neighboring California church families celebrated the first service of worship in the Valley congregation's new building.

The significance of what Thanksgiving really means was more than evident as the congregation of over 200 people listened to Pastor Cypherd's sermon, and then shared together in Holy Communion which was presided over by the pastors of all three churches. Over 175 members and friends then joined in a festive and delicious Thanksgiving dinner.

After spending its formative years in a rented hall behind a bar in North Hollywood, MCC in the Valley has come "up front" by purchasing a former American Legion Post at 5730 Cahuenga Blvd., also in North Hollywood. In the speculative real estate market of Southern California it has taken MCC in the Valley four years of shopping to find an affordable location that was practical for its use, but it already feels like home, and will feel even better when Pastor Cypherd has his high school American Legion "Good Citizenship" Award framed and on the wall of his new office!

The first worship service in the new building was a shared Thanksgiving Day service with the pastors and members and friends of the Valley MCC, All Saints MCC, and MCC West Bay united together in prayer, praise and the Lord's supper.
— photo by Peter, photographer

MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

Great Lakes District Coordinator, Rev. Ken Martin, commenting on the church in Milwaukee says: "They are meeting in a Presbyterian church and are negotiating to make this a permanent home. They are averaging around 40 in attendance. This is a most remarkable group. Their most recent newsletter is one of the finest I have seen from any group; it included articles on the establishment of a Lending Library, and on a mutual sharing relationship they have established with a group of gay Christians in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada."

* * * * * *

The newly-organized MCC Milwaukee choir sang at services for the first time on November 6, directed by Brother Jon Kile. The Worship Coordinator for MCC Milwaukee is Charles J. "Chuck" Schinlaub.

Newsletter
MCC Milwaukee, Wisconsin
December, 1977

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

MCC Baltimore has started a successful Healing Ministry among the sick in the general as well as the gay community.

Originally intended as a minor part of the midweek Gospel Service, congregational prayers for the sick were found to have a very positive effect upon those suffering from physical and/or emotional illnesses.

As a direct result of this, Pastor Stan Harris was asked to perform the Rite of Laying on of Hands for the sick for some of the members. As requests increased it was felt necessary to transform the Wednesday evening Gospel Services in a Ministry of Healing.

In harmony with the scriptural practice, (Mark 6:13, James 5:14-16) the sick are prayed over, annointed with oil, and hands are layed upon them by the pastor, and sometimes also by members of the congregation. During the Laying on of Hands the entire congregation prays fervently for the sick person.

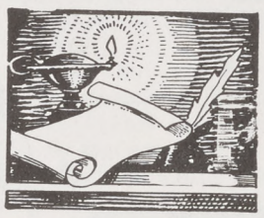
It is believed that because of the healing ministry of MCC Baltimore several instances of modification of medical treatment have occurred. In one case a sister's hysterectomy was cancelled, the hospital staff referred to her as their "miracle patient." In another case a sister was spared a serious bone graft to her knee and sent home with only a bandage instead of a complete leg cast. News of these healings has started to spread, and requests for hospital visits and prayer are being received at the Baltimore church—even from other states.

Rev. Harris, commenting on the healings said, "Isn't it strange? We pray, then when the prayer is answered we are surprised! During the services the congregation prays earnestly for the sick, and they are made well; it is a very valuable ministry, and one that the congregation can share with the pastor. Christ told us to heal the sick, and so we do—because we believe in Jesus' name."

Jay DeSort and Dolores Berry, members of the Board of Directors of MCC Baltimore, accompanied Rev. Harris to address the Columbia Collective of Ministers in early December.

Rev. Harris explained the work and mission of Metropolitan Community Church, and then the three of them answered questions from the various denominational leaders. Representatives from various Catholic and Protestant churches were in attendance, as well as a Jewish Rabbi. The MCC group was well received. Rev. Harris has also been scheduled to speak to a group of lay people from a local Episcopal church on the work and mission of MCC.

Attendance at MCC Baltimore has increased from an average of 20 each week in March to an average of 55 each week in December; a very positive spirit is in evidence among the faithful there.



HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

MCC Hartford has been making a difference in the Capitol Region and beyond for four years now, having recently begun a parish ministry in New Haven, too. Here are some of the high points of MCC Hartford's ministry in 1977:

The church's Gay Switchboard referral and hotline has been strengthened, and their Gay and Alternate Lifestyle Counseling Service expanded.

MCC Hartford has reached thousands of persons because the public media, both broadcast and print, have found the church's ministries newsworthy and its people articulate.

Many others have been reached through high school and college campus appearances, classroom discussions, and programs at area churches, conducted by the pastor and members of the church.

MCC Hartford has influenced attitudes in local churches through their active participation in the Capitol Region Conference of Churches.

They have secured a Resolution from the Hartford City Council affirming the human rights of gay persons, and won the respect and support of other public officials.

In May, they organized "An Evening for Human Rights", which became a focal point for Connecticut's response to ignorance and bigotry in Dade County, Florida, and had an informative half-page article by Pastor Jay Deacon published on the Hartford *Courant*'s op-ed page to discuss the situation.

MCC Hartford provided a home and spiritual family for many who were torn and frightened by a gathering storm of repression and prejudice, and for many others whose journey from oppression to liberation demands a community in which it is possible to struggle Christianly with the demands of love in a new day.

SOMEWHERE coffeehouse, one of the church's ministries, has provided a friendly home and someone to talk to for hundreds of people on Friday nights.

WOMENSPACE coffeehouse has provided a new center for women struggling with the meaning and possibilities of their lives -- or simply seeking a place to enjoy old friends and meet new ones.

Their Christian Education program has provided resources in relating realistically and Christianly with the Bible and the issues of life.

MCC News, the church's excellent publication, has provided an important communications link in the region, providing news and views on the things that affect the congregation and community.

Since August, MCC Hartford's New Haven parish has provided opportunities for worship, community, and growth to southern Connecticut.

And every Sunday evening (and in Hartford, Wednesdays, too), a genuine sense of community can be found as MCC celebrates life's pain, joy, and possibilities together -- in a service that centers not on imposed dogma, but on the experience of life, interpreted in light of the loving source of life, who calls all people to live it fully!

MCC News
MCC Hartford, Connecticut
December, 1977

PASTORAL CHANGES
TO DECEMBER 31, 1977

The Rev. John Ayers: from Pastor, MCC Toronto, Ontario, Canada, to minister-in-residence, Christ Church, MCC Miami, Fl.

The Rev. Larry Bernier: to Associate Pastor, All Saints MCC, West Hollywood/Beverly Hills, CA.

The Rev. Roy Birchard: from UFMCC Field Office, Washington, D.C. to Worship Coordinator, Tidewater MCC, Norfolk, VA.

The Rev. Valerie Bouchard: from Assistant Pastor, Good Shepherd Parish, MCC Chicago, IL to Interim Pastor of same.

The Rev. Ron Burcham: from MCC Sydney, NSW, Australia, to Pastor, MCC Tulsa, OK.

The Rev. Lee Carlton: from Church Extension Officer for the United Kingdom and Western Europe to Pastor, MCC Jacksonville, Fl.

The Rev. Lucia Chappelle: newly-licensed to Associate Pastor, All Saints MCC, West Hollywood/Beverly Hills, CA, and Associate Pastor, West Bay MCC, Santa Monica, CA.

The Rev. Brenda Cisneros-Hunt: from Assistant Pastor, MCC of the Twin Cities, Minneapolis, MN, to feasibility study, Saint Paul, MN.

The Rev. Walter Collins: from Pastor MCC Tulsa, OK, to Assistant Pastor, MCC San Diego, CA.

The Rev. Cliff Connors: from staff minister, MCC Sydney, NSW, Australia, to the pastorate of same.

The Rev. Frank Crouch: from MCC Phoenix, AZ, to Pastor, MCC Pomona, CA.

The Rev. Carol Cureton: from MCC St. Louis, MO to Fellowship Headquarters, Los Angeles, CA, as administrative Elder.

The Rev. Bonnie Daniel: from Pastor MCC Cincinnati, OH to: (plans uncertain).

The Rev. Judy Davenport: newly-licensed to Worship Coordinator, MCC San Antonio, TX.

The Rev. Keith Davis: from Interim Pastor, MCC Jacksonville, FL to Worship Coordinator, MCC Columbia, SC.

The Rev. Kris Dodds: from Pastor, MCC Albuquerque, NM to Staff Minister, MCC Pomona, CA.

The Rev. Jim Dykes: from Chaplain, Grady Memorial Hospital, Atlanta, GA, to Pastor, West Bay MCC, Santa Monica, CA.

The Rev. Howard Gaass: from District Coordinator, Northeast District UFMCC, to Pastor, MCC Cincinnati, OH.

The Rev. Shelley Hamilton: from Worship Coordinator, MCC State College, PA, to Assistant Pastor, MCC New York, NY.

The Rev. Jackie Harris: newly-licensed to Assistant Pastor, MCC San Jose, CA.

The Rev. Jim Harris: from Pastor, MCC Dallas, TX, to Pastor, MCC St. Louis, MO.

The Rev. Brent Hawkes: newly-licensed to Interim Pastor, MCC Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

The Rev. Randall Hill: newly-licensed to Worship Coordinator, MCC Knoxville, TN.

The Rev. Sherry "Jamie" James: newly-licensed to Associate Pastor, MCC St. Louis, MO.

The Rev. Jim Jaynes: from Pastor, MCC of Christ the King, Oklahoma City, OK, to (unknown).

The Rev. Susan Kliebstein: newly-licensed to Worship Coordinator, MCC Pensacola, FL.

The Rev. Louise Leopold: from temporary Worship Coordinator, Chatanooga, TN, to minister-in-residence, MCC Atlanta, GA.

The Rev. Clain Lust: Worship Coordinator, MCC Tacoma, WA.

The Rev. Kenneth Martin: from Pastor, Good Shepherd Parish, MCC Chicago, IL, to sabbatical.

The Rev. Sandra MacMillan: newly-licensed to Assistant Pastor, MCC (Honolulu) Hawaii.

The Rev. Rhea Miller: from Worship Coordinator, MCC Boulder, CO, to Guadalajara, Mexico to teach and study.

The Rev. Robert Miller: from Worship Coordinator, MCC of the Ozarks, Fayetteville,AR, to: (unknown).

The Rev. Jo Ann Monte: newly-licensed to Worship Coordinator, Emmanuel MCC, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

The Rev. Richard Ploen: from faculty, Samaritan Theological Institute, to staff minister, Christ Chapel MCC, Santa Ana. CA

The Rev. Carolyn "Dusty" Pruitt: (Student, Iliff Seminary) to Assistant Pastor, MCC of the Rockies, Denver, CO.

The Rev. Steve Quesnel: newly-licensed to Worship Coordinator, MCC Fresno, CA.

The Rev. Marge Ragona: newly-licensed to Pastor, MCC Providence,RI.

The Rev. Ted Richmond: newly-licensed to Assistant Pastor, MCC Detroit, MI.

The Rev. James E. Sandmire: to Pastor, All Saints MCC, West Hollywood/Beverly Hills, CA.

The Rev. Ruth "Rob" Shivers: from Worship Coordinator, MCC Austin, TX, to Assistant Pastor, MCC Kansas City, MO.

The Rev. Weldon Stewart: newly-licensed to Worship Coordinator, MCC Grand Prarie, TX.

The Rev. Charlene Taylor: newly-licensed to Worship Coordinator, MCC Memphis, TN.

The Rev. William Taylor: from Worship Coordinator, MCC Greensboro, NC, to: available for call.

The Rev. Angie Umbertino: newly-licensed to Co-Pastor, MCC Akron, OH.

The Rev. Robert Waldrop: newly-licensed to Pastor, MCC Salt Lake City, UT.

The Rev. Jan Weymouth: from Acting Pastor, MCC Sydney, NSW, Australia: returning to Brisbane pastorate.

The Rev. Karen Wheeler: newly-licensed to Co-Pastor, MCC Akron, OH.

The Rev. Willie White: newly-licensed to Worship Coordinator, St. John's MCC, Raleigh, NC.

WORSHIP COORDINATOR
ASSIGNMENTS
TO DECEMBER 31, 1977

Mr. Dan Dagenais: Worship Coordinator for Greensboro, NC.

Mr. Carl Jones: Worship Coordinator for MCC Austin, TX.

Mr. Chet Jones: Worship Coordinator for MCC State College, PA.

Mr. James Maguire: Worship Coordinator of MCC Christ the Liberator, Princeton, NJ.

Ms. Pat McCann: Worship Coordinator for MCC Jackson Purchase, Paducah, KY.

Mr. Buck Rhodes: Worship Coordinator for MCC Albuquerque, NM.

Mr. Paul Robertson: Worship Coordinator, MCC Chatanooga, TN.

Mr. Jose vonBuhler: Church Extension Officer for the United Kingdom and Western Europe, and Worship Coordinator, MCC Thames Valley, England.

Ms. Rita Wanstrom: Worship Coordinator for MCC of the Ozarks, Fayetteville, AR.

VACANT PULPITS
TO DECEMBER 31, 1977

CHARTERED CHURCHES:

MCC Dallas, TX
MCC Fort Worth, TX
MCC Toronto, Ontario, Canada (presently has Interim Pastor)
King of Peace MCC, St. Petersburg, FL (presently has Worship Coordinator)
Christ the King MCC, Oklahoma City, OK (presently has Worship Coordinator)
Good Shepherd MCC, Chicago, IL (presently has Interim Pastor)

MISSIONS

Open Door Chapel MCC, Ft. Wayne, IN (presently has Worship Coordinator)
MCC Worcester, MA (presently has Worship Coordinator)
MCC Albuquerque, NM (presently has Worship Coordinator)

NOTE:
The congregation of MCC Augusta, GA, (a Study Group) is seeking a professional minister of the Fellowship to serve them; they offer a financial arrangement.

MINISTERS AVAILABLE FOR CALL
TO DECEMBER 31, 1977

(This is not a complete listing.)

Rev. Buff Fisher
c/o MCC Tucson
POB 27628
Tucson, AZ 85726
(Pastor, Assistant, or Staff)

Rev. Michael England
c/o MCC Washington
945 "G" Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20001
(Pastor, Assistant, or Staff)

Rev. John Ayres
c/o MCC Miami
POB 370963
Miami, Florida 33137
(Pastor, Assistant, or Staff)

Rev. Weldon Stewart
4604 Hopkins
Dallas, Texas 75209
(Pastor, Assistant, or Staff)

Rev. David Gunton
c/o MCC Toronto
29 Granby Street
Toronto, Ontario M5B 1H8
Canada
(Pastor or Assistant)

Rev. Brenda Cisneros-Hunt
113 Winnipeg Street
St. Paul, Minnesota 55117
(Pastor)

Rev. Jerry Sloan
6419 East 12th Street
Kansas City, Missouri 64126
(Pastor, Assistant, or Staff)

Rev. Kris Dodds
POB 26554
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87125
(Pastor, Assistant, or Staff)

Rev. Donald Eastman
c/o Holy Spirit MCC
POB 4546
Des Moines, Iowa 50306
(Pastor)

Rev. Candace Naisbitt
5100 Leetsdale, Apt. 351
Denver, CO 80222
(Pastor or Assistant)

Rev. William Taylor
POB 5551
Greensboro, NC 27403
(Pastor, Assistant, or Staff)

Odds & Ends

GENERAL CONFERENCE is coming up in 1979 in Los Angeles. This conference will celebrate the 10th anniversary of the founding of our Fellowship. If you start saving and planning for it now, you'll avoid many last-minute headaches when the time arrives!

Does your congregation "sign" services for our deaf brothers and sisters? What? You don't have any? Perhaps you would if deaf interpretation was available! And what about children? Perhaps your church group needs nursery/child care facilities and/or a Sunday School program!

February 8th is Ash Wednesday, and Ash Wednesday means the beginning of the Lenten Season. In Lent we pause to look inside ourselves; we ponder on all that God has done for us in Christ, and (hopefully) we are moved by this to make a new or renewed commitment to serve Christ. How will you serve Christ in and through your church and community in 1978?

Remember to send stories, articles, photographs, newspaper clippings and other items of interest to us at IN UNITY. We're always in need of these materials as we develop the magazine!

May 1978 bring you many blessings!

ADVERTISMENT

Understanding the Homosexual Person

We're all in this alone. But persons who are homosexuals often find themselves more alone than most in the church.

As a pastor or counselor, how do you respond to these persons? What are the real challenges facing homosexuals in our society?

You'll find answers to these questions in this two-cassette program by Lester Kirkendall, one of the most widely-recognized authorities in the fields of human relations, sex and sexuality education.

Kirkendall's presentation will give you practical guidelines on how to relate with warmth, compassion and sensitivity to the homosexual person. (2 cassettes, 2 hrs.)

Clip and mail to:
NCR Cassettes, Dept. U., Box 281, Kansas City, MO 64141

☐ **YES,** please send me _____copy (s) of Understanding the Homosexual Person at $15.90 ea.
☐ Bill me.
☐ Check enclosed. (NCR pays postage/handling)
☐ Charge to: ☐ Master Charge ☐ BankAmericard/Visa

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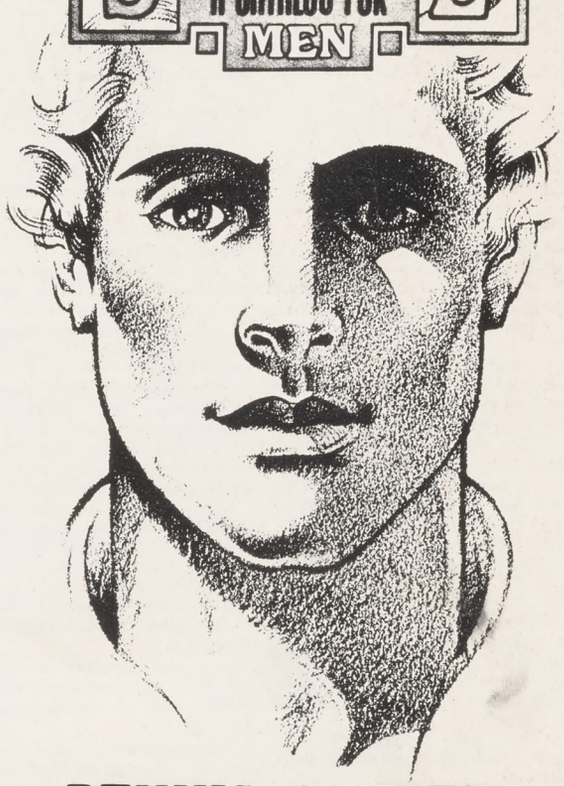
ADVERTISMENT

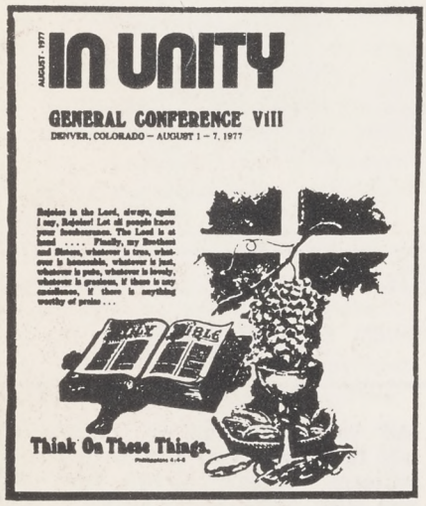
GAY SOURCE

A CATALOG FOR MEN



DENNIS SANDERS

The first book to cover every aspect of gay lifestyles in America today — contains a chapter about the work of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. A Berkely Windover Book (Coward, McCann & Geoghegan). $6.95 — available at your bookstore now.



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